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SUPER PLAY

ISSUE 7

MAY 1993

OVER 212 GAMES INSIDE!

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REVIEWED!
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Super Play

Issue 7 May 1993

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SUPER PLAY EDITORIAL

FROM THE BIG CHAIR

THE NEWS YOU NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D HEAR: CHEAPER PRICES ON THE WAY!

Our full contents listing starts just over the page

If you went into Toys R Us at half-term (sometime in the middle of February, depending on where you live), you could have picked up an incredible bargain. In a 'two week special' they were selling the stand-alone UK SNES (no games attached) for an incredible £79.94 – which is £30 below the old official RRP!

The reason why is simple – Nintendo managed to persuade shopkeepers to take around 700,000 units in the last months of 1992, machines that (though sales were healthy) haven't all been shifted yet. With the news that Nintendo are to split with their old UK distributor Bandai and set up on their own, retailers have taken it upon themselves to shift the remaining old stocks the best way they know how – selling them off cheap. Hence the recent Toys R Us prices – and hence the generally much lower prices some industry insiders are predicting over the months to come.

But why are the stores so keen to get rid of old stock? The answer is actually quite significant. You see, with the newly formed Nintendo UK now taking charge of the UK business, the firm's number one priority has to be to cut down on the lead Sega's Mega Drive has over here – and to cut it down fast. The quickest way to do that will be to have official UK prices undercut Sega's by a significant amount – a price war is coming, many shops feel, and they want rid of their old Super Nintendoes before it happens.

So *are* Sega and Nintendo going to go at each other tooth and claw this year, in a fight to dominate the 16-bit console market? If so, it's going to be a very tough scrap indeed. A scrap that, in the short term at least, seems likely to see game prices slashed across the board. Whatever happens, it looks like it's going to be a pretty interesting year...

Matt Bielby

Matt Bielby
Editor

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY

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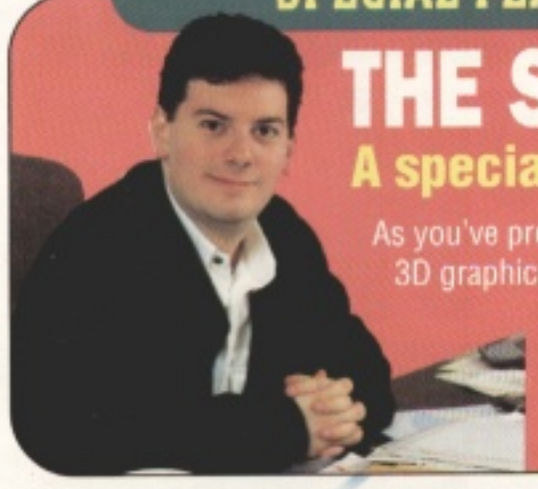

THE STARFOX CREATORS

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As you've probably gathered by now, the power behind *Starfox*'s amazing 3D graphics is provided by the new Super FX chip. And the people behind that innovation are Argonaut, who're based right here in Britain. That being the case, we simply couldn't resist the temptation to go along and have a chat to them. You'll be surprised by what we found out...

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T ENTS

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A Bee Team Production

GAME REVIEWS

IMPORT REVIEWS

Guess which game's been getting us most excited at *Super Play* this month. No, it's not *Psycho Dream*, a useless Japanese fighting game. Nor is it *Evil Sword* – which is also a useless Japanese fighting game. Nor is it the supremely tedious *Aerobiz*. And it's certainly neither of the nobby board game conversions we've come across – *Monopoly* or *Clue*. We've had fun with *Cosmo Gang: The Puzzle*, but that's hardly the answer. And, although *Batman Returns* is one of the best film conversions ever, even that's not it. Nope – the big import game of the month, the one that makes up for the failings of all the others, is *Starfox*. And it's fab.

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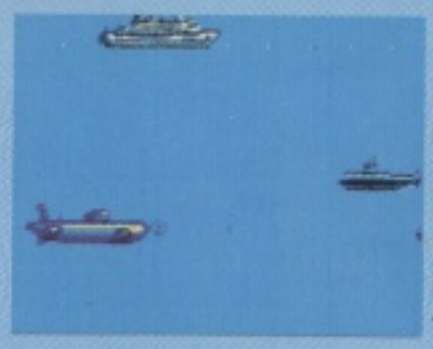

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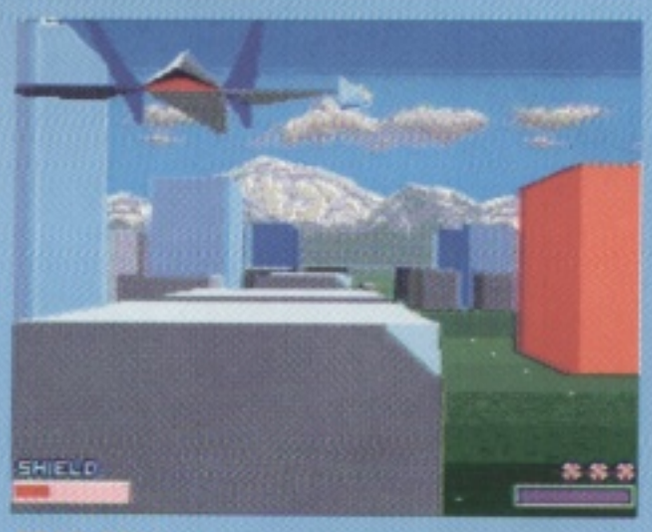

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SUPER EXP

NEWS NETWORK SUPER NINTENDO NEWS NETWORK SUPER NINTENDO

This month in our news pages: the latest Japanese shoot-'em-ups previewed; yet another CD ROM update; win some fab Shooting Watches and other goodies; Peter Evans reports from the recent Japanese arcade game show; and loads of previews of new games!

Nintendo Restructure

ALL CHANGE AS THE WAR WITH SEGA HOTS UP

Last month we revealed that Nintendo were planning to split with their long-term distributors Bandai, and take direct control of the European side of their business for the first time. Well, this has happened all right, and faster than we thought – four now companies (Nintendo UK Entertainment, Nintendo France, Nintendo Belgium and Nintendo Netherlands) are now handling sales, marketing and distribution (but not development or manufacture) of Nintendo video game systems and own-brand games across most of Europe. Many ex-Bandai staff are with the UK branch, though Bandai itself continues to operate in the UK, handling SNES products from companies like Capcom, JVC, Taito, Interplay, Tradewest etc. Indeed, the two offices are located only yards from each other in Fareham, Sussex, so close co-operation between them can be assumed.

Details of how Nintendo's takeover can be expected to effect things – including whether it will mean lower prices on at least some games, as has been predicted (see From The Big Chair) – will be announced soon, and reported next month.

Rumoured to be sold at an artificially low £39.99 price point – which, if true, means Nintendo will be throwing away much of the profit they would otherwise make on this more-expensive-than-normal-to-manufacture cart in favour of getting a major new product out there in big numbers – it's *Starfox*. Could this sort of bold marketing decision be the sort of thing we can expect of the new Nintendo UK?

SUPER PLAY

MAY 1993 ISSUE 7

SUPER PLAY PROFILES

These are a few of our favourite things...

MATT BIELBY

Favourite object: An elephant
...and why: Because elephants never forget...
Worst pain ever experienced: When my broken leg was healing wrong, and they had to re-break it
Middle name: Paul
Preferred breakfast cereal: Sugar Puffs
I wanted *Super Play* to be called: *'Japanese Animation Review'*
I've been playing: *Starfox, Pro Quarterback, Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt,*

SUE GRANT

Favourite object: *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath
...and why: I know just how she feels
Worst pain ever experienced: When a fish van knocked me over and I cracked my head open
Middle name: Jane
Preferred breakfast cereal: I don't eat breakfast
I wanted *Super Play* to be called: *'Knitting Monthly'*
I've been playing: *Tetris 2 + Bombliss, Monopoly, Starfox*

JASON BROOKES

Favourite object: A bottle of gin
...and why: It doesn't give me a hangover
Worst pain ever experienced: My nose job
Middle name: Richard
Preferred breakfast cereal: Golden Nuggets
I wanted *Super Play* to be called: *'PAL and SCART Answers'*
I've been playing: *Starfox, Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt*

PRESS

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Now PC Engine gets Street Fighter II!

We already know that *Street Fighter II* – the biggest SNES game to date, and responsible for much of the success of the machine worldwide – has been converted by Capcom for release on the Sega Mega Drive, the Super NES' arch rival. This is, as far as most Super Nintendo gameplayers are concerned, terrible news – but there's worse to come. You see, NEC's successful (in Japan, at least) PC Engine is getting the game too – released on a 16 Mbit Hu-card, not CD – further eroding the SNES gameplayer's claims to the game. Where will it end?

PC Engine Duo, Super Nintendo and Sega Mega Drive, in that order.

THROW AWAY YOUR ADAPTOR (AGAIN)!

First, the bad news

Once again, the advance of technology means that everyone's universal adaptor is out of date – even newer ones that work with *Mario Kart* et al. The problem is caused by *Starfox*, and any other games that use the new Super FX chip. They simply won't work with current adaptors, so it's useless trying to get imported Japanese and US versions of the game to work on your UK SNES. And the official UK release is still a month or so away (29 May, we're told).

And now the good news

But already the first *Starfox*-compatible adaptor has arrived! It's called the 16-Bit Convertor, it's made by Jive Consoles, (0509) 211335, it costs about £15 (phone to check) and it works with *Starfox*! The difference between this and older adaptors is simply that it's got wider connectors on it, to incorporate the extra signals that the *Starfox* cart uses to send graphics information to the Super Nintendo. So you will, after all, be able able to jump the queues and buy an import version of the game. Phew.

It's the new *Starfox*-compatible 16-Bit Convertor.

Chun Li lookalike fever!

The latest craze in Japan – dressing up as characters from *Street Fighter II*, particularly Chun Li – is now sweeping the world. America has already held at least two *SFII* lookalike contests – one giving away a Nissan 300ZX as top prize! – while a recent contest in Chiba ended in a brawl, with two contestants apparently deciding to prove their worthiness to represent the self-styled 'strongest woman in the world' by beating the stuffing out of each other!

Left and below: Contestants at the recent American Chun Li lookalike contests.

Now *Super Play* is to hold the first ever national Chun Li lookalike contest. It will be sponsored by a major industry player which we'll reveal next issue, but the prizes will be fab, including a Honda CRX car, a guest appearance on TV's *Gladiators* (where our lookalike will take on Jet and Flame at various contests), and a trip to Tokyo next April to take part in the international Chun Li lookalike finals. Start getting your costumes ready now – all the details will be revealed next issue!

A bottle of gin
sn't give me a

xperienced: My

hard
st cereal:

lay to be called:
Answers'
: Starfox,
ger Hunt

JONATHAN DAVIES

Favourite object: My pillow
...and why: It's all I've got to go home to
Worst pain ever experienced: Kneeling on a drawing pin
Middle name: Haven't got one (strictly speaking)
Preferred breakfast cereal: Weetos
I wanted *Super Play* to be called: *'All Right(ish) Play'*
I've been playing: *Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt, Starfox, Batman Returns*

LISA NICHOLLS

Favourite object: Tigger
...and why: Because Tigger's a wonderful thing
Worst pain ever experienced: Having my *Carpenters* tape turned off by the rest of the team
Middle name: Olivia
Preferred breakfast cereal: Coco Pops
I wanted *Super Play* to be called: *'Splay'*
I've been playing: I haven't, because I've been too busy

JEREMY BRIDGEMAN

Favourite object: My wad
...and why: I can buy lots of things with it
Worst pain ever experienced: Waking up
Middle name: William
Preferred breakfast cereal: Weetabix (on a bed of crunched-up custard creams)
I wanted *Super Play* to be called: *'Super Power Format Plus'*
I've been playing: *World Class Rugby, Chessmaster, Pro Quarterback*

SUPER PLAY PROFILES QUIZ

One member of the *Super Play* team was a (bit of a) child star, playing, amongst other things, one of the lead roles in *Annie Get Your Gun* at the Hexagon Theatre in Reading. Our hero/heroine says of the experience (not very revealingly): 'It was great.' But which member of the team was it? Send your answers to There's No Business Like Show Business, *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, and you could win a T-shirt! Last month's answer: Jez was the guy whose parents used to deliberately leave him in supermarkets. The winner was Alan Dykes of Liverpool.

ONLY IN JAPAN

More odds and sods (but mostly odds) from that home of the bizarre, the Land of the Rising Sun...

HOLD THE MAYO!

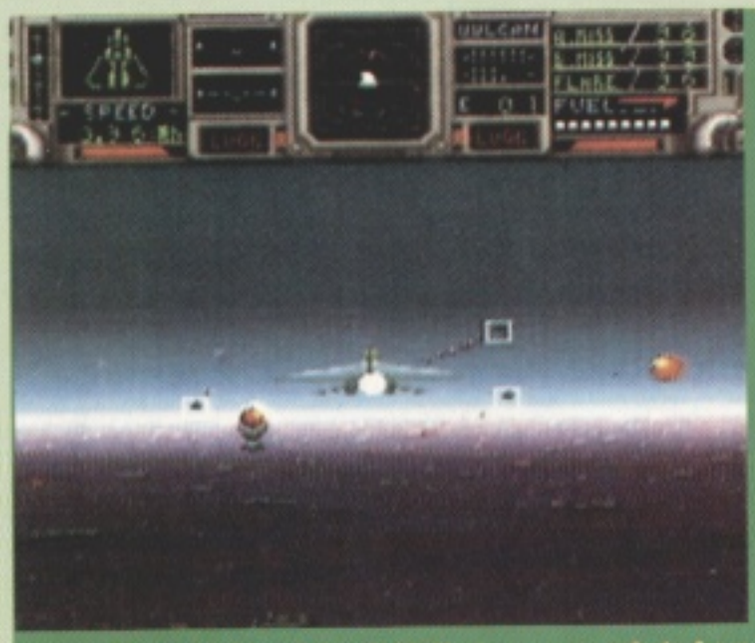
Oddest partnership of the month has to be that between Nintendo and Japanese mayonnaise giant Ajinomoto. The result is *Wonder Kitchen*, a mouse-controlled SNES game that'll be given away at the rate of 2,000 a month as part of a promotional campaign, and which centres on recipes involving mayonnaise. We're still trying to think of *one* recipe that uses mayonnaise.

This is what Ajinomoto's mayonnaise looks like!

CONSOLE MANIA

Sega now has a rival in the CD console business – but it's not tardy Nintendo or NEC. It is, in fact, Japanese computer giant Fujitsu, whose new console – 'Marty'(!) – will be based on their FM Towns machine. (The cheapest FM Towns is over £1,000.) The new console will run FM Towns software (both CD and floppy disk) plus audio CDs – Fujitsu reckon they'll have around 300 Marty-compatible games released by the time you read this.

Taking on the console market with Marty, and – yes – it will actually look like this!



Above, right and far right: Various screenshots from *Super Air Diver*, soon to be released on Super NES.

SUPER AIR DIVER

(ASMIK)

Don't get too excited, but Asmik, producers of such shoot-'em-up disasters as *D-Force* and *Xardion*, are getting ready to release a jet flight simulation in a style similar to that of *Pilotwings*. As with Nintendo's game, a DSP chip has been included to help with the sprite handling and the movement of the 3D landscape. No release date has been fixed yet, but we'll keep you informed as to whether the quality (hem, hem) will approach that of Nintendo's classic game.

10,000 INVOLVED IN FIGHT

The Japanese take *Street Fighter II* very seriously indeed. A contest was recently organised in Tokyo by a company called Pony Canyon – the people behind one of the *Street Fighter II* soundtrack CDs – which was entered by 10,000 people. The contestants played *SFII* against Maki Miyamei and Junichi Yamamoto, who play the parts of Chun Li and Ryu respectively in Capcom promotions. The 15 eventual winners took away – wait for it! – a Capcom joystick each.

Above: Will the real Chun Li and Ryu stand up? Left: Playing *that* game.

STREET FIGHTER III ON THE WAY?

Super Play sources in Japan claim that Capcom is currently working on a new fighting game that could easily turn out to be *Street Fighter III* – the big news being that it's not just 16 Mbit, but a whopping 32 meg! Other details are sketchy at present, but we'll keep you posted as we hear more.

Top and above: Fighting *Street Fighter II*-style. Right: Will we soon see *SFIII*?

THE BEST EVER BASEBALL GAME?

Super Famistar 2 (Namcot)

When Jonathan did his mammoth baseball game round-up in issue 2, he pointed out that the very best baseball game may have been one that we didn't manage to get hold of – *Super Family Star* from Namcot. What he didn't realise was that the game is really called *Super Famistar* (an abbreviation of *Super Family Stadium*) and is the biggest selling baseball game in Japan. We're still not sure how it plays, but one things for sure – *Super Famistar* is amongst the better-looking baseball games around. And the sequel looks even better! We're promised four modes in the game, three of which were in the big-selling version for the Famicom (the Jap NES). The new addition is a facility for creating your own characters and teams. Of course, this will all be handled in Japanese text, so it's unlikely many copies will make it into the UK, given that baseball's not that popular here. Look for a brief review next issue.

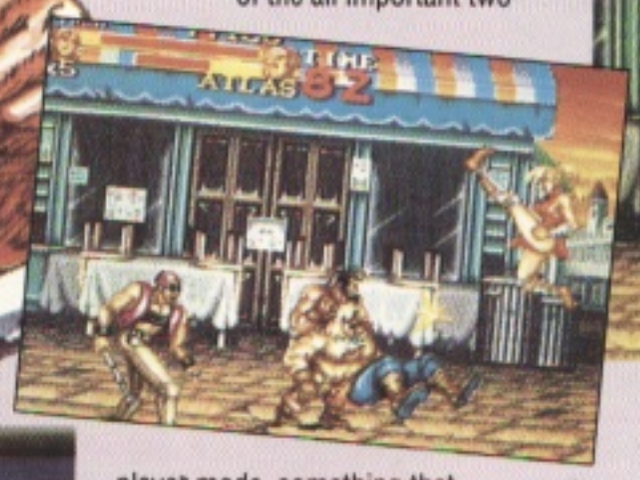
Right and below: Play ball!

Far left: Going for a home run. Left: That says *Super Famistar* 2, honest!

THE NEXT BIG BEAT-'EM-UP

Final Fight 2 (Capcom)

'I'm back to kick ass!' growls Haggar. 'Grrrrrr!'



Last month we showed you a couple of screenshots from this much-anticipated beat-'em-up. And guess what? Here are some more! The biggest problem with the original game was, of course, the lack of the all important two-player mode, something that the sequel will definitely include. This time there's no continue mode (*Eek! – Jonathan.*) and Cody and Guy have been given the boot, with two new characters, Carlos Miyamoto from Brazil and Maki, Guy's childhood sweetheart (who also controls her father's Dojo!), taking their place. In case you were wondering, Guy is away on a trip trying to get harder and Haggar and the two newies have to head to Hong Kong to take on Mad Gear who has kidnapped Maki's sister, Lenna (who is Guy's fiancee) and Guy's old Mentor! Confused? Anyway that's the fab plot. Improvements include better moves, meaner baddies and the backgrounds are more Parisian than ever before (despite being set in Hong Kong). You won't need especially keen eyes to spot the Arc de Triomphe and (erm) Charles de Gaul Airport as you punch and kick your way through the gloriously pretty landscape, that's for sure. Due on an 8 meg cart in Japan in May, with a Stateside appearance a few months later. Look out for a review soon – it should make *Streets Of Rage II* on Mega Drive look a bit, well, crap.

Far left: Haggar's megaton kick takes out a couple of thugs. Centre: Maki got bored of school martial arts – they were too tame for her, apparently. Above: Hey! Haggar's got some cool new street fighting boots!

POP'N TWIN BEE (Konami)

Left: This is cute isn't it? Below: Well, whad'ya know, so's this!

Below: Evil Doc Murdock and critters.

important simultaneous two-player mode preserved.

As in the original game, baddies come in all shapes, and are *very* weird. For example, in Dandelion Town (level one) you're attacked by all kinds of fruit, including pineapples, bananas and grapes, all of whom shower you with bullets. Really tough baddies can be taken out with a brand new weapon – the boxing punch. When you kill baddies they leave bells behind, a bit like those in *Parodius*, which power up your current weapon if you collect them.

Hurray for Pandas! 54 mpg and only £4,999 on the road!

Here at *Super Play* we see lots of great looking games, but few have promotional artwork fab enough to rival *Pop'n Twin Bee*'s. So we've decided to give it even *more* coverage before our review next issue. *Twin Bee* was originally a coin-op which made it into this country under the title *Bells And Whistles*. Conversions followed onto the Famicom (NES) and PC Engine, and this new Super Famicom game is actually a souped-up sequel with the all-

Go on! Pop 'em, Twin Bee! This is an end-of-level boss – a giant metallic spider thing.

MARIO EASTER EGGS

Chocolate Island Revisited!

With Easter slap bang in the middle of the month, what could be a more fitting Merchandise Of The Month than – yes! – a Mario Easter Egg? This particular one has some nice pictures of Mario, Luigi, Princess Daisy, Bowser and co (in parallax, no less!) on the front, a free 'Do Not Disturb' door hanger on the side, and an (easy) Princess Daisy puzzle on the back. And the egg itself? It's sort of chocolatey, with mushroom-shaped jellies inside. It's not exactly massive for £1.45, but then what do you expect to get from Nintendo – something cheap?

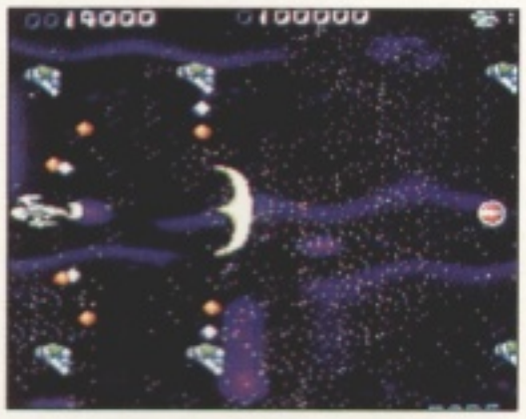
MERCHANDISE OF THE MONTH

FIVE NEW SHOOT-'EM-UPS

(AND THEY'RE ALL JAPANESE!)

Darius III

(Taito)



There's already one version of *Darius* for Super NES – *Darius Twin*. But it's not actually out in the UK yet, and won't be for another couple of months at least. In Japan, however, things have moved on a bit: there's actually a new, original SNES game – *Darius III* – due soon. First, though, *Darius Twin*. While hardly a spectacular blaster, it *is* a *Darius* game, and that's good enough for us. We're kinda fond of *Darius*, you see, as we are of *Twin Bee*, because it's a perfect example of the way the Japanese excel when it comes to game design. Okay, so we're mainly talking aesthetics – all the terrific robotic fish and huge metallic guardians etc – but the multi-choice level layout is a neat feature, and the way the arcade original was spread over three screens was little short of brilliant.

Currently, the best *Darius* game on a home system is a CD ROM version on the PC Engine (with an even better one appearing soon), so let's hope this new Super NES version, *Darius III*, will give our machine a decent version of its own. *Darius III* is in its early stages of development at the moment, so don't expect a release for quite a while yet.

Darius III features spectacular coin-op-style graphics throughout.

100% Cotton!

(Datam Polystar)

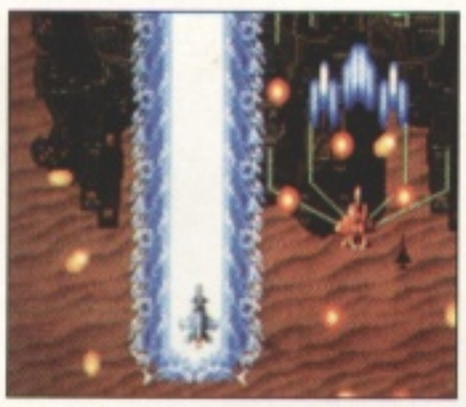
Lovely bright graphics abound as Cotton flies past assorted cute baddies and backdrops. The game looks good, that's for sure.

One of the cutest blasters set to appear on the Super Famicom is Datam's conversion of *Cotton*, a little-known coin-op. *Cotton* is actually the name of a witch-like heroine who rides a broomstick through seven levels of scrolling and shooting action, desperately trying to save her boyfriend Willow who's been kidnapped. Yes, it's role-reversal time! Quite why she's '100%' this time we're not sure, but we can only guess that *everything* from the coin-op will be included, as with Hudson Soft's PC Engine Super CD version that's just appeared in Japan. Unfortunately, Datam's track record isn't the most impressive around, with games like *Musya*, *Cacoma Knight* and this month's *Sword Of Darkness* all failing to make the grade. Let's hope they pull their cotton socks up for this one – it looks too good to waste.

Cotton's magic broomstick can shoot out this magical fire dragon on occasion, frazzling most things in its path.

Sonic Wings

(Video System)



Sonic Wings: Strike Gunner revisited?

Sonic Wings is a little-aeroplanes vertical scroller in the *Strike Gunner* mould – but much better looking. With tough end-of-level bosses, a selection of planes to choose between, some top-quality power-ups, and (possibly) a two-player mode, it looks like it could easily carve a place for itself in the affections of UK gameplayers. After all, Video System's last release (the neat *Super Volley II*) became a bit of a *Super Play* favourite.

Bio Metal

(Athena)

Bio Metal's graphics are good looking, true, but hardly spectacular. Isn't this sort of organic metal stuff old hat by now?

Bio Metal has just appeared in Japan, and it looks, to our eyes at least, a tiny bit like a PC Engine game called *Dead Moon* (also by Athena). So it's quite possibly a sequel, then. But, more importantly, this 8 Mbit blaster features some really lovely graphics and eight levels of varied action. Naturally, power-ups aren't exactly thin on the ground either, with wide lasers, homing missiles and some *Darius*-style wave weapons being just a few of the accessories available for taking out the alien colonies. Now all we need is some bad programming and we'll have yet another shoot-'em-up to file under 'Nice graphics, shame about the slow-down'. Apparently the game features 'a system where the difficulty level is adjusted according to the player's individual ability' – something we've heard before, but is rarely apparent when you're actually playing the game. Whether this will extend to cover Matt's 'individual ability' remains to be seen, though with any luck we'll let you know next month.

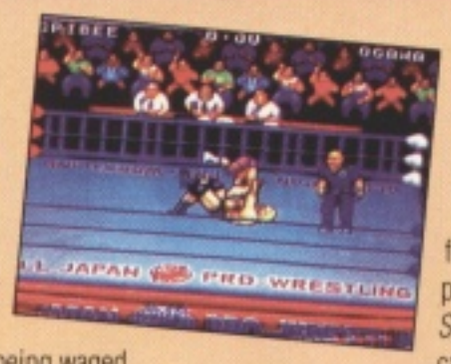
Complaints about the graphics aside, you can't deny this blaster features some impressive boss creatures.

Our type of shoot-'em-up

Super R-Type 3 (Irem)

As shown in issue 5, Irem recently released the third coin-op in their *R-Type* series, *R-Type Leo* – which boosted flagging interest in the games. Now they have announced plans to develop a second version of *R-Type* for the Super Famicom. It's not yet been decided whether the game will be an accurate translation of the third coin-op or, as before, a mixture of previous games with original ideas thrown in. Surely essential, however, is that Irem get around their perennial slow-down problem – as mentioned last time. As we all know, it's difficult for a blaster to be fun if the action slows down repeatedly. Exciting news then, but it's still not guaranteed that this'll make a great game.

'I'M GONNA RIP YER SHORTS OFF!'
(and other assorted wrestling terminology)



WWF fans bemoaning the lack of decent wrestling action on the Super NES will be pleased to learn that there are two wrestling carts on the way from Japan! And the weird thing is that both titles seem to be virtually identical – it's almost like there's a head-to-head war being waged between the two companies responsible!

The first game, from Varie, which is called *Super Pro Wrestling*, features 10 members of the New Japan Pro Wrestling Federation and two different playing modes, along with some lethal moves including the Scorpion Death Lock, the Yakusa Kick and – wait for it – the Dragon Slipper (!).

The second game, from NCS, the producers of *Assault Suits Valken*, is called *Japanese Pro Wrestling*. It, too, features 10 real-life wrestlers and a colossal seven modes, one of which is a tag-team option for 10-player matches! Super Multitap compatibility looks a possibility here. Both games are due to appear on whopping 16 Mbit cartridges in about June, and you can probably expect a battle as to which one gets into the shops first. Look out for reviews of both games in *Super Play*.

Above: *Japanese Pro Wrestling* from NCS will probably be the better game. Left: *Super Pro Wrestling* features nicely animated sprites though.

Sell out!

Toys 'R' Us takes off in Japan!

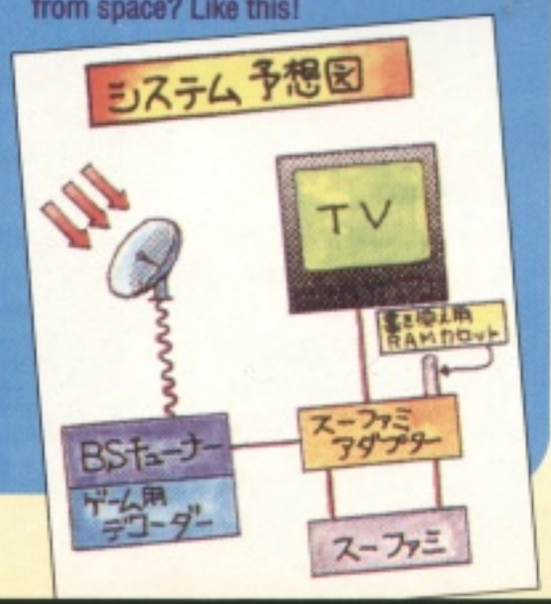
One of Toys 'R' Us' many new Japanese stores – the US toy chain is doing very nicely indeed, thank you.

Irony doesn't come much more ironic than this: The Japanese are now having their own games sold to them – by the Americans! Despite first setting foot in Japan less than two years ago, Toys 'R' Us, now far and away the world's biggest toy retailer, is rapidly becoming the biggest toy retailer in Japan too, leaving the country's native toy shops wondering what's hit them. Success seems largely due to the chain's sheer size, which means it can buy toys much cheaper than everyone else, and sell them at correspondingly lower prices. This being the case, Japan's naturally economically-minded games players are starting to change their allegiances – and in huge numbers, too. They must be – the company's total sales for its first full year of trading amounted to a very healthy ¥12 billion (about £70 million).

GAMES FROM OUTER SPACE

Among Nintendo's more grandiose plans at the moment is one to beam games directly into people's homes, via a satellite link. To be able to take advantage of the system you'll need a satellite dish (a Sky one is unlikely to work), and a supply of blank cartridges, which can have games downloaded into them and then be erased at a later date. Oh, and you'll probably need lots of cash, too – don't expect the service to be free. Launch date is still a couple of years off and, as yet, the scheme only applies to Japanese Super Famicom owners.

How will you be able to beam games from space? Like this!



SUPER PLAY'S HOT LIST

As well as the games we've rated highly in this issue, these older ones are worth a look. We play 'em a lot more than we probably should.

KING ARTHUR'S WORLD

(Jaleco)
If you liked *Lemmings*, but you're looking for something a little more hard-edged, a little more adventure-based, a little more atmospheric, and (maybe) a little less immediately addictive, *King Arthur's World* is your game. We've had great fun with it, and haven't even come close to conquering all the levels.

KIKIKAIKAI

(Natsume)
Although *Kikikaikai* doesn't have a chance of ever being really famous (not in this country, at least), it really is very good. It's hard to say why, exactly, but it's probably got a lot to do with the slick, colourful graphics and the simultaneous two-player mode. And the fact that it's really difficult, and we still haven't completed it yet.

ASSAULT SUITS VALKEN

(NCS Masiya)
To be honest, we've got a teeny bit fed up with playing *Valken* in the traditional, trying-to-get-to-the-end way. But our love of the game remains undiminished – we could never get bored of clumping about in a robotic exoskeleton, parading our weapons. Think of it as a recreational device rather than a game.

DESERT STRIKE

(Electronic Arts)
Hi-tech this isn't – just a big, flat, scrolling desert, some slightly primitive buildings and vehicles, and a big helicopter. It is, however, brilliant fun to play, and very addictive. You've got the perfectly-balanced blend of strategy and shoot-'em-up to thank for that. Watch out for the sequel, *Jungle Strike*, coming soon, too.

TETRIS 2 + BOMBLISS

(Bullet-Proof Software)
If we turn our backs on the *Super Play* Super Nintendo for even a minute, the chances are we'll turn round to find Sue's playing *Tetris* or *Bombliss* again. (That or gazing lovingly at her growing collection of postage stamps.) There must be a reason, of course, and it's that it's simply one of the best versions of the game ever.

This month, an ill and bedridden Peter Evans – *Super Play's* Japanese correspondent – finds he has little else to do but play and talk about games. So he does.

LIVE FROM HELL CITY

CASUALTY!

It may well just be a cold, but, well – you never can be too careful. It's winter here in Japan, just as it is at home, and for the past five days I've not been at all well. In fact, I have a terrible headache, I can't sleep and I've got a raging temperature. And I've been like this for over a week now. I'd better go and see a doctor, I eventually decide. Now where did I put my medical insurance card?

The nearest place to where I work is the Toho University Hospital, so I stagger on down there: Fill in this form, they say, and then wait for your name to be called at counter three. So I did. And then I did some more.

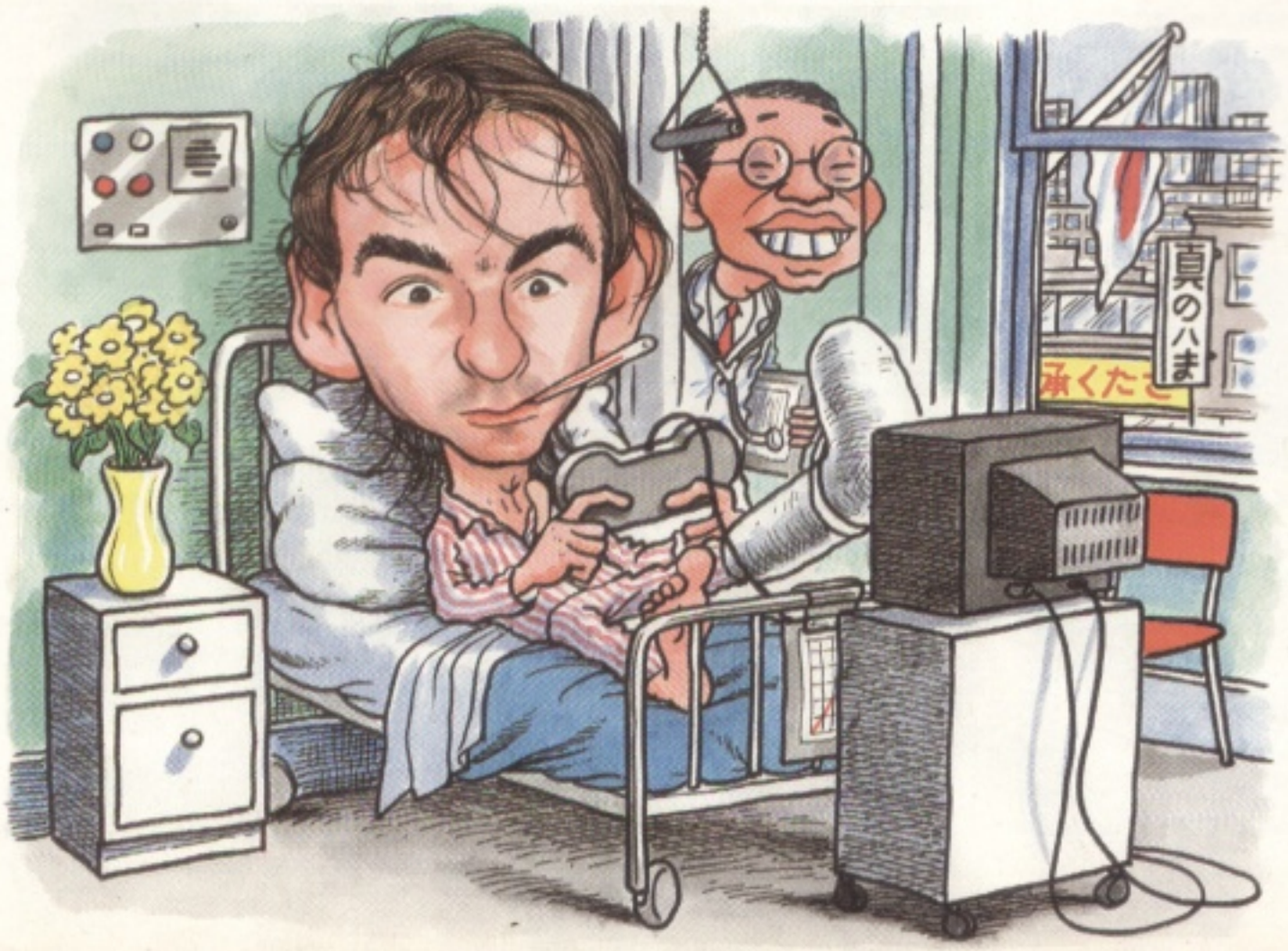
Indeed, 'wait until your name is called,' could well be the motto of this place. Eventually, a cute little nurse called Miyoshi got round to asking what was wrong with me, and then it was back down the corridor to wait with 80 other sick people – for long enough to have read at least one novel as I sat there (and maybe even written another of my own).

Eventually, a tall nurse handed me a ticket, and it was time to step through the paper curtain into the limelight. Beyond the curtain was something not unlike a consulting room – or, rather, a consulting cubicle, a vague collection of partitions designed to give each patient at least nominal privacy from everyone else in the room. The University Hospital is, of course, a teaching hospital, so the person I spoke to was like a Japanese version of Dougie Howser, MD, while his assistant looked barely out of nappies.

More waiting followed, and more nurses, but eventually I got my perscription and toddled off down to the pharmacy – where I was asked to queue yet again! (Japanese chemists are rather like MacDonalds, but running in slow motion.) My advice? Don't get ill in Japan, unless you're *very* patient!

This month, then, there was nothing for it but to go home, take my tablets, and catch up on my Super Famicom gameplaying. In the Eyecatch section you'll find bits and pieces about some of the stuff I've been mucking around with lately, along with a report on a recent Japanese show. Hopefully next month I'll be up and about, and service will be resumed as normal.

Sayonara!



Before he was confined to his sickbed by his deteriorating health, Peter Evans managed to make it to this year's AOU – Japan's big annual arcade machine show. He wasn't *that* bowled over by what he saw...

COIN

Above: Sega's brilliant eight-player *Virtua Formula*.
Right: A demo of Sega's Model 2 graphics system.

Tokyo's annual AOU show is one of the most important events on the Japanese amusement machine industry's calendar. This year it was held in Chiba, on the 16 and 17 February, and, as usual, all the latest arcade machines were displayed to the Japanese trade. But the most noticeable aspect of the show this year was the total lack of impressive new developments, and the smaller range of games on show.

Unsurprisingly, Sega was the major exception, orchestrating what was perhaps the show's biggest hit with *Virtua Formula*, an upgraded version of their amazing link-up driving game *Virtua Racing*. The game still allows up to eight players to participate at once (in Japanese arcades at least), and the 3D polygons are even more impressive than before, supported by a hydraulic cockpit and a huge 74 inch screen for each driver. Sega had even newer technology on show as well,

Right: The six-player *Galaxian 3: Project Dragoon*.

OP COP OUT?

in the form of a joint-venture with US giant General Electric. The Model 2 graphics board (Model 1 was used in *Virtua Formula*) powered a wickedly impressive display of high definition 3D graphics on an enormous screen.

In fact, most companies seemed to see 3D as the only major way to tempt people away from the competition provided by home consoles. This was certainly true of Namco, who have wowed us with the 3D polygon hardware in games like *Winning Run* and *Star Blade*. Their *Galaxian 3: Project Dragoon* is a six-player shoot-'em-up with graphics that have to be seen to be believed. (Not one to play after you've just bought *Starfox*!) Namco also had *Exvania*, a *Bomberman* clone, on display.

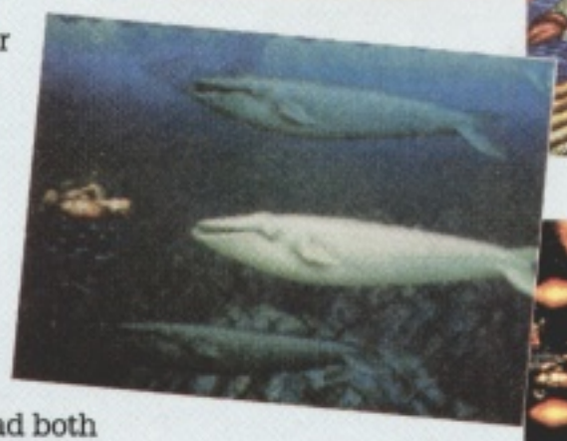
Taking a step back into two dimensions, conventional coin-op technology was still very much in evidence, with the usual plethora of beat-'em-ups making up most of the numbers. Konami had *Mystic Warrior*; Irem had *Hook*; Capcom had both *Cadillacs And Dinosaurs* (based on a cult American comic book) and *Dynasty Wars II*; and even Video System (who almost never dip into this market) had a strange-looking *SFII* clone alongside their *F1 Grand Prix: Part Two* coin-op that's also just appeared on the Super Famicom.

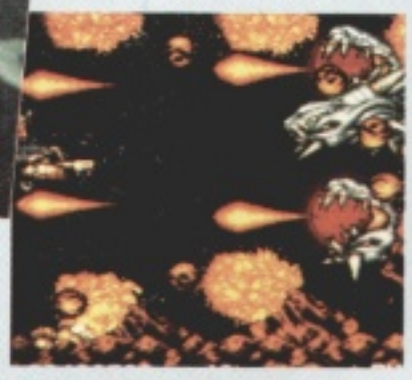
SNK had more beat-'em-ups on show for its Neo Geo system in the shape of sequels to *Fatal Fury* and *Sengoku*, this time appearing on a new piece of hardware called the Neo Geo Deck – a smaller, re-styled arcade unit for places like hotels, cafés and waiting rooms. Let's hope British Rail aren't foolish enough to consider putting Neo Geo Decks in waiting rooms in the UK – they're dinky enough to fit inside a rucksack!

Finally, one genre that had a revival was the shoot-'em-up, with both Irem and Data East showing variations, using bi-planes and submarines.

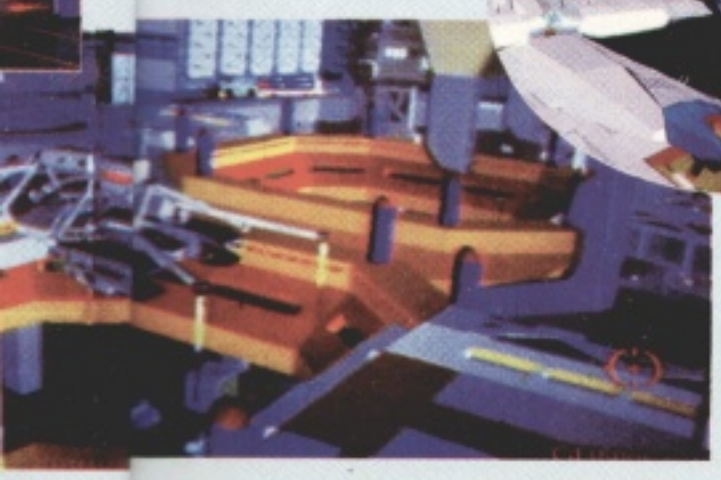
All in all, this year's show had fewer games than usual, and most of what *was* there wasn't that exciting. The coin-op industry has been suffering at the hands of the console for some time now, and it looks like Nintendo may have made the right decision when it pulled out of this market last year. But it was reassuring to see that the industry is still capable of graphics and thrills that home machines haven't a hope of emulating. This has always been the force keeping the industry alive. And anyway, who could honestly say they would like to see coin-ops disappear forever?

Left: Capcom's new action game *Dynasty Wars 2*.
Below left: Data East's *The Great Ragtime Show* – one of a few new shoot-'em-ups.
Below: One of SNK's latest – *Fatal Fury 2*, more *SFII*-style antics.





Above and right: Irem's tough *Great Undersea Battle*.
Below right: Yet another beat-'em-up, SNK's *Sengoku 2*.



Above and left: Utterly amazing visuals from Namco's *Galaxian 3*.

SUPER PLAY EYECATCH

This month I thought I'd give you an extended, more visual, trip through the Japanese Super Famicom scene, with the help of some of the rather attractive advertisements which appear in the Japanese games magazines. Sadly, many of the games on this page will remain obscure to you lot – they rely heavily on Japanese text, making it unlikely that many importers will bother with them. Still, there's always the chance they'll get translated at some point in the future (and seeing how the other half live *is* most of the point of this column in the first place). So feast your eyes on this little lot, but remember – the adverts are often rather better than the games themselves...

GHOST KITARO

Bandai – 8 Mbit

This is one of Bandai's big licences at the moment. It's a scrolling platform adventure for one or two players. The game's hero, Kitaro, can use various objects to kill baddies, such as his whip, his sandals(!) or even his hair, and the game is structured more or less like others of the same ilk. Apparently, the ghost of the title has go into the future to prevent himself from being killed. The graphics look really great, so hopefully a few copies will make it over to the UK.

ULTRASEVEN

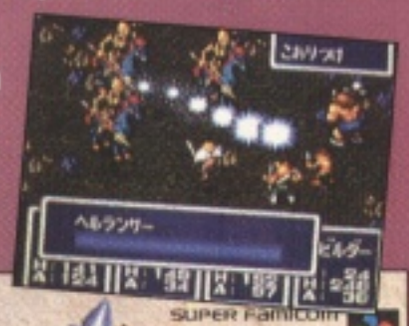
Bandai – 8 Mbit

I remember the thumbs-down reaction of many UK games magazines to the first *Ultraman* game, but it was actually very popular here in Japan, selling loads, mainly because the Japanese love the *Ultraman* characters, and, as in the UK, big licences sell, no matter how poor the game behind them. This sequel, which is actually based on an off-spring of the series, looks a bit better than the previous game with some interesting graphical effects used. It's available now, but, to be on the safe side, it's probably better to try this before you buy.

THE DRAGON KNIGHT: BREATH OF FIRE

Capcom – 12 Mbit

Capcom's latest is a bit of a departure for them – they normally specialise in action games. *Breath Of Fire* is a graphically superb RPG with isometric fight scenes and a selection of interesting characters to control. The advertising has been heavy for this title – Capcom are taking no chances in the overcrowded Jap RPG market. It's due in late April and, in view of the name behind it, will almost certainly make it into Britain.



NOBUNAGA'S ARMY

Angel – 8 Mbit

I have to admit that this kind of wargame isn't really my cup of 'ocha', but the artwork's pretty enough to warrant it some space. Anyway, games like these from companies such as Koei, Wolf Team and, in this case, Angel are very popular in Japan. This was released here in late February, but I can't see any of you shedding tears if it isn't translated into English. (*You obviously haven't met Jonathan – Ed.*)

DORAEMON

Epoch – 8 Mbit

Now this *is* cute. *Doraemon*, the atomic robot cat, is quite a big manga star in Japan and has also appeared on numerous video game formats, most notably on the PC Engine in a top-view *Pacman*-style maze game. His latest adventure is for the Super Famicom, and is a cute-looking platform game with RPG elements. The graphics look pretty good and there's very little confusing Japanese text, but the theme is probably a little *too* Japanese to make it comfortable conversion material for a Western release.

2020 SUPER BASEBALL

KAC – 12 Mbit

KAC's conversion of this futuristic Neo Geo baseball game looks great. The Neo Geo excels at baseball games, and the three available for it are proof that the game *can* be fab fun when treated right. The best bits of *2020 Super Baseball* are the cybernetic players that can be 'powered up' individually, and the excellent league system which gives the one-player mode a decent life-span. We'll review this next issue.

ART OF FIGHTING

KAC

Yes, yet another popular Neo Geo game makes it over onto the Super Famicom. The original was one of the largest carts for the Neo at 102 megs (and SNK still insist that that's megabytes, and not megabits!), so how this will be translated into a Super Famicom cart remains to be seen. The game itself is a standard *Street Fighter II* clone with huge sprites, and lots of special moves and bonus stages. There's no release date announced yet, but expect it to appear towards the Summer.

NEUGIER

Wolf Team of Japan – 8 Mbit

This is a new action-based RPG that smacks of Enix's *Soul Blazer* – baddies are taken out by a quick slash of the sword instead of the traditional side-on combat mode. The quest leads you on a trip through a strange and creepy world, including a section aboard a ghost-ridden shipwreck that's been raised from the water by an evil sea monster. Apparently, the gameplay has a few nice touches that distinguish it. It's out now, but mightn't make it to the UK in very large numbers.

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WIN! 10 SHOOTING WATCHES! JIMMY CONNORS GAMES, T-SHIRTS AND CAPS!

Wimbledon's just weeks away again, and (not entirely by coincidence) we've got a whole stack of tennis-related goodies to give away. And some fabulous Shooting Watches!

The Shooting Watch is all the rage in Japan at present. It's a watch. It's a countdown timer. And it's a really weird (but utterly compulsive) (and rather painful) game where you've got to press the A, B, X and Y buttons as many times as you can in 10 seconds. Can you beat the record set by *Super Play*'s man in Japan, Peter Evans – an incredible 412?

With his cheeky grin, sensible haircut and devastating double-handed backhand, Jimmy Connors is the darling of the tennis courts. That's why UBI Soft chose him to front their 88%-in-issue-5-rated *Jimmy Connors' Pro Tennis Tour*.

THE PRIZES

The 10 winners will get a specially-imported Shooting Watch, a copy of *Jimmy Connors' Pro Tennis Tour*, a top-quality Jimmy Connors T-shirt and a Jimmy Connors cap.

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

Below is a scene from *Jimmy Connors Pro Tennis Tour*, frozen for eternity, but with one thing missing – the ball. What we want you to do is – that's right – spot it. (Readers of our review of the game in issue 5 should be thoroughly practised at this by now.) Mark an 'X' where you think the ball is, cut out the coupon and send it to Jimmy Connors Competition, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. And make sure it reaches us by 14 May 1993. The 10 people who, in the editor's opinion, spot the ball most accurately win the prizes. Simple as that.

THE RULES

* The closing date: 14 May 1993.
* The editor's decision is final.
* And the editor's decided already that employees of Future Publishing and UBI Soft aren't allowed to enter.

Name:
Address:

Send to Jimmy Conners Compo, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.

WIN! ULTRAMAN VIDEOS! ULTRAMAN POSTERS! AND EVEN ULTRAMAN HIMSELF (SORT OF)!

Super heros don't come much superer than Ultraman. Not only is he the star of a Super Nintendo game (which is slightly nob, but that's hardly his fault), but now he's in a video as well! And we've got 25 of them to give away!

THE PRIZES

25 lucky winners get an *Ultraman* video from Island World, along with a fabulous Ultraman poster. But that's not all! The five top-prize winners also get an imposing 8 inch high model of Ultraman himself!

WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO

To be in with a chance of winning, you'll have to answer the following question correctly:

THE RULES

* The closing date: 14 May 1993.
* The editor's decision is final.
* Employees of Future Publishing and Island World are not allowed to enter.

Which large Japanese company is behind both the *Ultraman* films and the *Ultraman* games?

Done that? Okay, write your answer on the back of a postcard and send it to: *Ultraman* Competition, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, making sure it gets here by 14 May 1993.

ANIME WORLD

Pronounced 'ah-nee-may'

1993: THE YEAR OF ANIME

This month Helen McCarthy looks at *3x3 Eyes*, the very latest Manga Video release, talks about a new company importing Japanese animation into the UK, and makes her own personal selection of the best videos to buy.

British anime fans are going to have a great 1993. For a start, as well as the well known Manga Video label, another has appeared – Anime Projects, who are releasing subtitled material from the American label AnimEigo in the UK, and though their tapes aren't cheap (£21.99 each, compared to £12.99 for Manga stuff), or that long (varying from 25 minutes to just under an hour), three words should be enough to convince you that they offer value for money. Those words are *Bubble Gum Crisis*.

Kennichi Sonoda's babes'n'bikes epic mixes cyberpunk, rock, hardsuits and hard action in an irresistible cocktail – sell your granny to get hold of them. Anime Projects have plans for more subtitled releases too, including Sonoda's tale of crazed speed merchants and kidnap mob mayhem, *Riding Bean*, so keep an eye out for that too. The other big advantage these releases have is if your mum/granny/girlfriend complains that you're watching too many videos, you can tell them that you're actually reading instead!

Island World, owners of the Manga Video label, have a range of English-dubbed goodies lined up for 1993, starting in April with *3x3 Eyes Part One*, followed by titles like *Vampire Hunter D*, *RG Veda*, *Heroic Legend Of Arslan* and *Lensman*. (They've also launched a live action label, Ultra, to showcase things like *Ultraman*, and one for 'Japanese art films' called ICA.) Here's a sneak preview of *3x3 Eyes*, the first title on their anime list.

Pai, seen here with a dragon friend yesterday, shows why the series is called *3x3 Eyes*. To see how she looks 'normally', check out the shot below right.

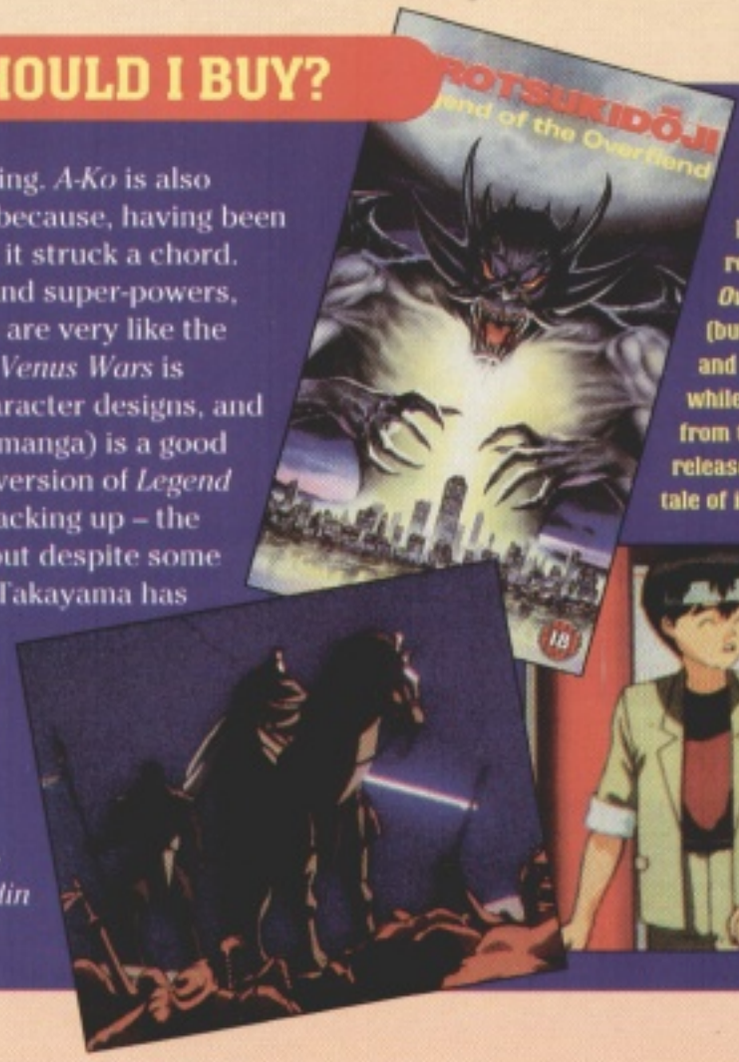
3x3 Eyes, or *Sazan Eyes* (as it's called by Japanese speakers), is a four-part OAV series based on a manga by Yuzo Takada. It's an everyday tale of immortal folk – in particular, a cute girl called Pai, with beautiful eyes (all three of them). Pai is a 'Sanjiyan Nukara' – an

WHICH TAPES SHOULD I BUY?

Helen McCarthy gives her own personal views on the best buys around.

Since I've been talking about new tapes for your collection, it seems like a good time to respond to those of you – and there've been a few – who've written in asking which of the tapes available in the UK are the best buys. Now everyone has their own opinion on this, but you asked for mine, so here it is. I'm assuming that loads of you have got *Akira* (turn to page 77 to find out how to get hold of a copy, if you haven't), but here are some views on the other 'must-haves.'

Bubble Gum Crisis (despite the high price) and *3x3 Eyes* are essentials. Of the other Manga tapes, the ones I wouldn't be without are both the *Dominion: Tank Police* tapes and *Project A-Ko*. *Dominion* is fast, funny, and the best dubbed of all the Manga offerings, full of sight gags and lots of mayhem but no serious damage – unless you count falling over laughing. *A-Ko* is also funny and fast, and I love it because, having been to an all-girls school myself, it struck a chord. Leave out the mobile suits and super-powers, and British convent schools are very like the Graviton Institute For Girls. *Venus Wars* is worth buying – I like the character designs, and the story (again based on a manga) is a good one. I can't listen to the UK version of *Legend Of The Overfiend* without cracking up – the dub is their silliest so far – but despite some patchy animation (director Takayama has glued three bits of his original animation video (OAV) series together into one feature), it remains a visually stunning film, as well as a grade A shocker. Others out there, however – *Fist Of The North Star* and *Odin* – are far less essential.



Some of Helen's favourite English language anime releases: ***Legend Of The Overfiend*** is on the left (but watch the violence, sex and laughable dubbing); while below are two shots from the newest Manga release ***3x3 Eyes***, an everyday tale of immortal folk.

Three of the newest anime-related videos released onto the UK market. Clockwise from right: *Ultraman: The Alien Invasion* – a crazy Australian/Japanese live-action co-production; the brilliant *Bubble Gum Crisis*; and *Riding Bean*, an impressive anime road movie.

immortal being whose mystical energy is channelled through her third eye. When this is closed she's a sweet, normal teenager who just wants to become human; when it's open, she's a 300-year-old goddess with awesome power.

In the video, Pai is found in the mountains of Tibet by eccentric anthropologist Dr Satora Fuji, who is killed in a mysterious incident. Before he dies he tells her that his son Yakumo, who lives in Tokyo, will help her contact his old friend Aguir, editor of an occult magazine in Hong Kong, to find out how to achieve her aim of becoming human. Four years after his death, she eventually gets to Tokyo to search for Yakumo, but is mugged in Shinjuku and loses all her belongings. By coincidence (!), the passerby who helps her is the very person she's seeking – Yakumo Fuji, a brash, streetwise boy whose friends in the yakuza (Japanese mafia) help to recover all Pai's belongings except her staff.

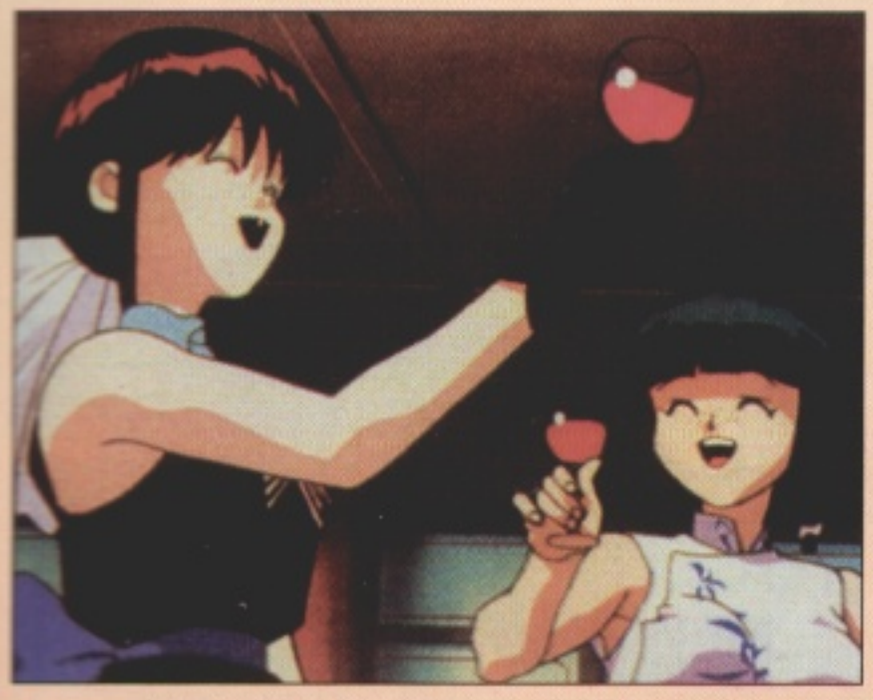
The problem here is that this staff is the 'home' of Pai's friend, the Takuhji – a large and bad tempered monster who sets out on the usual monster jaunt to destroy Tokyo. When Pai and Yakumo try to calm him down, Yakumo is mortally wounded. The only way Pai can save him is by absorbing his soul. He is completely healed (on the surface) but is now a Wu – a deathless being – and will stay that way until Pai becomes human. (It's not quite the same thing as being a zombie, but the distinction doesn't impress Yakumo.) Luckily, he doesn't find out about this until later in the story, when they arrive in Hong Kong, by which time he's grown very fond of the exceedingly cute Pai.

And so it goes. In Hong Kong our heroes learn that a statue called the Ningen (Human) can be used to help a Sanjiyan Kukara like Pai to become human – but it's just been stolen. The thieves call up some heavy firepower – in the form of various monsters – to keep it, but Pai is more than a match for them. Much violence ensues, with Yakumo discovering that being immortal doesn't make combat painless.

The *3x3 Eyes* manga is beautifully drawn, and that charm and skill have been transferred to the anime version. The scenes of downtown Tokyo are very convincing, and the characters are fun. Not having heard the dubbed version yet (Island World are still working on it as I write), I don't know how good the script and voices will be, but this is sure to be worth adding to your collection. So start saving your pennies now!

ANIME CONTACTS

Anime UK magazine, 70 Mortimer St, London W1 (£3.50 from good SF/comic shops, or mail order from publishers + 70p p&p).
The Manga Club, Island World Communications, 40 St. Peter's Rd, London W6 9BD.



3x3 Eyes – slick animation, appealing characters, a bit of romance, plenty of action and more than a few jokes. What more could you ask for?

Island World, the company behind Manga Video, has two new labels on the go. While their standard Manga imprint will continue to release the more mainstream Japanese anime, and Ultra will be bringing things like – yes! – *Ultraman* into the UK, potentially the most interesting of the three is ICA, which will release Japanese art-house movies. We're not sure yet what the ICA releases will look like (though expect live action titles like the ultra-gory *Body Hammer*), but here's what *we'd* like to see – great, more arty, anime, like *My Neighbour Totoro* (above), *Laputa* (top left) and *Tombstone For Fireflies* (left).

BOOKS

Oh dear. This is another of those months when 'Book' might be a more fitting title for the column. (But Jonathan Davies isn't going to let it get him down.)

GAME PLAYERS ENCYCLOPEDIA OF NINTENDO GAMES VOLUME SIX
Various authors.
GP Publications, 194pp, £13.95.
ISBN 0-929307-28-3

While the word 'encyclopedia' invokes visions of stacks of large, dusty volumes with stuff about weaving looms and the Niagara Falls in them, the *Game Players Encyclopedia* is nothing like that at all. It's quite the opposite, in fact, looking uncannily like a magazine. All sort of floppy and magazine-sized, it would look more comfortable sitting on a newsagent's shelf than a bookshop's. Okay, so the cover's a *bit* thicker than a magazine's, and it's got a couple more pages than your average magazine. But they don't come much more un-encyclopedia-like than this. It's even got advertisements in it, for heaven's sake!

But what else is in it? Well, the first thing to make clear is that this is another general Nintendo book, so there's NES and Game Boy stuff in there as well as Super NES stuff. How much there is of each is a little hard to judge, as everything's all jumbled up on the contents page with no indication of which machine each game runs on. We're probably looking at around 40% Super Nintendo content, though.

This is mainly made up of player's guides, but there are lots of reviews as well. The latter are of questionable worth, as a) they're all a bit out-of-date, and all the games have been covered before in *Super Play*, and b) this is an American book, and (at the risk of making a gross generalisation) the Americans take a 'creative' attitude to reviewing games. *Gradius III* gets 4/10 ('below average') for example, while *Chessmaster* gets 9 ('outstanding'). And the player's guides look nice and colourful – the whole book's in colour, in fact – but the advice provided is generally rather banal and unhelpful. And, bizarrely, the book includes a 'sneak preview' of *Zelda III*, a game that's been out in the States since last Summer. Don't ask us why.

Although it's attractively presented, then, and quite nice to have, the *Game Players Encyclopedia* costs an awful lot of money for what it is, and really can't be recommended. And no – regrettably, 'Game Players' doesn't have an apostrophe in it.

This is one of many Super Nintendo-related books available from good bookshops or from Computer Manuals Ltd, 50 James Road, Tyseley, Birmingham B11 2BA. Their phone number is (021) 706 6000.

NEW!

IT'S... THE SUPER QUIZ!

So you reckon you know all about Super Nintendo games then, eh? Um, probably not. But why not find out for sure with *Super Play*'s quiz? Starting with the 'Easy' setting, work your way through the difficulty levels until you get stuck. The number of the question you last managed to answer is, well, 'how good you are'. See if you can improve month by month! (Oh, and the answers are on page 98 for when you do eventually give up. No peeping, now!)

EASY

1 **Who's the final boss in *Street Fighter II*?**
2 **Who's playing the part of Mario in the film *Super Mario Bros*?**
3 **Which company publishes *Super Probotector*?**

NORMAL

4 **What is Hagar (out of *Final Fight*)'s day job?**
5 **In which district of Tokyo is Nintendo's headquarters?**
6 **What have the games *Super Adventure Island*, *Actraiser* and *Streets Of Rage* (er, on the Mega Drive) got in common?**

HARD

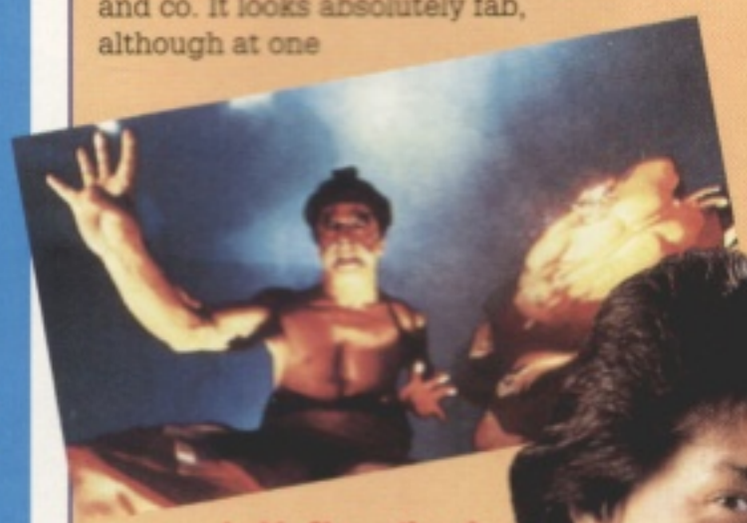
7 **In which game is Adol set to make a return soon?**
8 **What's the code number of the security chip in British Super Nintendo cartridges?**
9 **What's the name of the famous Japanese artist behind Japanese RPG *Elfaria*'s artwork?**

END-OF-QUIZ BOSS

10 And finally... Take the number of levels in *Super Mario World*, divide by the cart size (in Mbits) of *Fatal Fury*, and add on the date (eg 17th) of the month of 1990 that the Super Famicom was launched in Japan. Subtract this figure from the maximum number of sprites the SNES can display on the screen at once, divide by the number of *Mega Man* games there are altogether (including NES, Game Boy and the forthcoming Super NES version), and subtract the cart size (again!) of the Japanese version of *Actraiser*. Okay, taking this number to be an issue of *Super Play*, we want to know the name of the character in the bottom left-hand corner of the page designated by (wait for it...) the issue number you've just worked out, multiplied by the total number of levels in *Axelay*. Okay, got that?

'CHUN LI IS A MAN' SHOCK!

If you're serious about *Street Fighter II*, the one film you shouldn't miss this Summer is Jackie Chan's newie, which is based on the *City Hunter* anime and manga series. (See? We don't just wibble on about Japanese comics for the hell of it.) It sees Jackie trying to rescue his chum Goto from the clutches of a group of terrorists, and during one of the numerous fight sequences he knocks his head on a *Street Fighter II* machine. There follows a bizarre hallucination scene where he imagines he's been sucked into the game, and he's fighting against Ken, Zangief, Dhalsim and co. It looks absolutely fab, although at one point viewers have to witness the spectacle of Jackie dressed up as Chun Li! Yikes!



Assorted scenes from the *Street Fighter II* bit of *City Hunter*, including Jackie dressed as both E Honda and Chun Li, and another (British, apparently) martial arts star playing Ken. Dhalsim and Guile make appearances too.

Jackie Chan – though probably not quite tall or good looking enough for the *City Hunter* role as seen in the comics, we wouldn't say it to his face.

● We'll bring you more news on the *City Hunter* film, and what sort of release (if any) it'll receive in the UK, as we get it. Fingers crossed!

NEW TECH

BY JONATHAN DAVIES

CD ROM-MORE DETAILS EMERGE

But it's still a long way off, and hard facts are tricky to come by. Here, however, is the latest...

After months of chopping and changing, broken promises, making and breaking of agreements with other manufacturers and general procrastination, it seems that the Super Nintendo CD ROM is finally coming together. The specifications have now been more or less finalised (although they're still largely veiled in secrecy) and manufacture of the units is due to begin in August.

Don't get your hopes up just yet, though – the initial production run will go straight to third-party software developers, and the general public are unlikely to get their hands on the machines until early next year. Nintendo want to make absolutely certain that the launch of the CD ROM is solidly backed up by a range of high-quality software, avoiding the fiasco from which Sega's Mega CD is still trying to escape.

So what of the software? Well, the first people to look to are Nintendo themselves, who are certain to be working on at least one big title, possibly another *Mario* or *Zelda* game. Both would be ideally suited to the CD ROM's enormous storage capacity. Unfortunately the company's inscrutable secrecy makes solid information very hard to come by.

Third-party developers in Japan are a little more forthcoming, although many still seem to be hedging their bets. Konami claim to be working on an 'awesome game with unbelievable graphics and sound' – as yet unnamed – and Namco are saying something similar. Bandai are talking in terms of 'something big'; Square Soft have suggested a CD ROM-based *Final Fantasy VI*, a prospect that will excite Japanese games players more than British ones; and Imagineer are planning some sort of 'completely original' simulation game. The only company that is refusing to commit itself to the system is Capcom who, as we reported in *Super Play* 6, would rather wait to see how the CD ROM market fares. Here in the UK, Argonaut are planning to be among the first on the market with CD ROM software, and other companies such as Ocean and Storm are known to be working on projects.

As for the specification of the machine, details are still scarce. We explained in issue 5's New Tech that at the heart of the CD ROM would be a 32-bit RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) chip – now nicknamed the SCCP. This will act as a go-between between the Super Nintendo and the CD ROM, as well as supplementing the Super Nintendo's own processor, increasing the machine's performance substantially. It has since been announced that the processor's specification has been uprated, and it's now the very fast NEC V810 chip which clocks in at over 21MHz.

Back in issue 5's New Tech we explained that the unit would also use new hardware (nicknamed HANDS) that would assist the SCCP. This is now known to be another processor (a 65C02 running at around 4 MHz) that will effectively let the SCCP get on with things while the main memory is being accessed. Access times – the time it takes to find the bit of the CD it wants – are impressive (0.7-1.4 secs), so don't expect the long waits between levels and things that plague Mega CD and PC Engine CD games. And the system cartridge's memory has been enlarged to 12 Mbits (1.5 megabytes). Extra back-up memory will also be included in certain CD cartridges as explained in detail in issue 5. Those are the specs. But what does it all mean? What benefits will CD ROM bring? Basically...

- Huge storage capacity. A CD can hold over 500 megabytes of information – 250 times as much as the largest SNES cartridge! – which, if it's exploited to the full, will lead to some absolutely massive games. It's likely that much of this space will be filled with graphical data (after all, the vast bulk of the average cartridge is filled up with graphics, the code itself being relatively small). And you can almost certainly expect full-motion video too, which eats up storage space like nobody's business.
- CD-quality sound. That much goes without saying, really, as does the fact that it'll play ordinary music CDs as well.
- Increased processing power. As it stands, the Super Nintendo isn't the fastest machine in the world, as anyone who's experienced slow-down while playing a game will know. Things can be improved dramatically with chips like the DSP and the Super FX, however (as was explained in issue 4), and the CD ROM's 32-bit processor will make a huge difference. There are limits to what can be achieved, and the speed reached by the Super FX chip is probably approaching them. But you can be confident that the system will completely out-gun Sega's offering.
- When Sega introduced the Mega CD it added facilities like sprite scaling and 3D polygons to the Mega Drive, enhancing its capabilities considerably (although little software has appeared to take advantage of the new facilities). With the help of the Super FX chip, the Super Nintendo can do most of that already, so it's hard to see what else might be added.
- Cheaper games? Probably not. Although CD ROM games are much cheaper to manufacture than cartridge-based ones, their development costs more, so no changes there.

The System Cartridge will slot into the top of your SNES, and contain the CD ROM's processor along with the 12 Mbits of memory that games will load into, a section at a time.

And this is the powerful NEC processor that'll be at its heart. It moves at a cracking 21 MHz, or thereabouts, and looks quite nice too. (*?* – *Ed.*)

So finally – when? And how much? As we mentioned earlier, the CD ROM won't be generally available in Japan until early next year, and the price is currently still fixed at ¥27,000 (now about £150). With all the changes in Nintendo's European distribution network it's difficult to predict when we'll be seeing it. Probably next Spring, though, and for the sake of argument we'll say it'll cost... well, certainly cheaper than the Mega CD. How does £150 sound?

COMPO WINNERS

Ideal Home winners revealed!

Remember the 'Win some tickets for the Ideal Home Show' competition in issue 5? Well, we've sorted out the winners, and the following 10 people will already have received their tickets, gone to the show and (hopefully) had a damn good time by the time they read this: **Stephen Martin of London, C Hall of Witham, Tom Arthur of Chester, Robert Sowden of Penzance, M Quarterman of Huntingdon, David Martin of London, Raymond Oyediran of London, Andrew Jackman of Edinburgh, Niroj Abeyasinghe of London and Nnado Opara, also of London.**

Dragon Ball Z

By Bandai

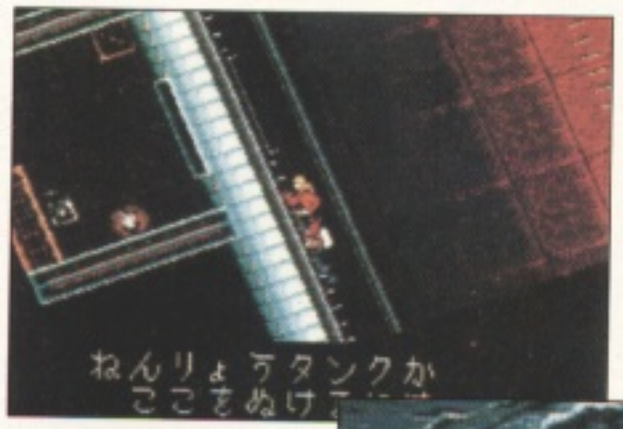
Last time it was an obscure RPG, this time it's a beat-'em-up! Those familiar with Akira Toriyama's *Dragon Ball Z* characters from the popular manga and video series will know that they can fire energy balls like Ryu of *Street Fighter II* – but with the power to destroy whole planets! This time the action is displayed side-on, but a split-screen viewpoint is also adopted to give the individual characters room to do the enormous jumps that they're famous for.

On the surface this looks like a rather simplistic beat-'em-up to us, with only average graphics – another case of a big name being used to make up for what's really a very average game, perhaps? – but, as ever, we're prepared to be proved wrong.

Action is presented *Street Fighter II*-style, but watch out Ryu – that's what we call a fireball!

SEPTENTRION

By Human



Graphics are by no means as nice as those in *Prince Of Persia*, by the look of things, and the action looks disturbingly similar to *The Poseidon Adventure*!

This is a bit of a departure for Human – a platform arcade adventure like *Prince Of Persia*, but where you have full control of a character aboard a sinking ship (in this case the luxury cruiser Lady Crithania). The object of the game is to see how many people you can save before the ship goes under, the ship's layout effectively becoming a maze where the screen is rotated as the ship is thrown about in the perilous waters. You have approximately one hour before the ship sinks, and the game ends differently depending on the actions you take throughout the game. There are strategic overtones too – when survivors are discovered it's up to you to convince them to follow you in your attempt to escape. Let's hope the odd bit of Japanese text doesn't spoil it. Available this May in Japan.

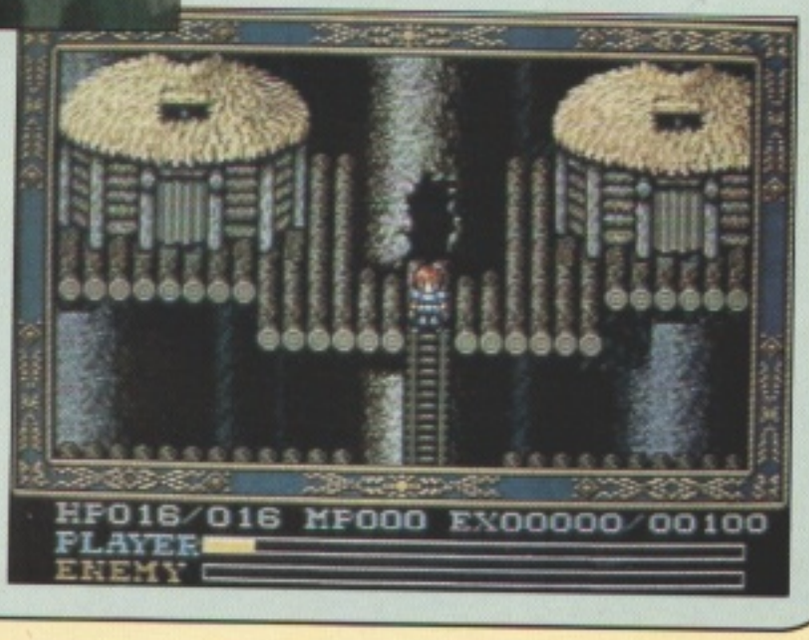
By the looks of that flag, the Lady Crithania is a British ship too! Titanic, anyone?

YS IV: MASK OF THE SUN

By Tonkin House

The fourth instalment of Falcom's popular *Ys* saga is scheduled for the Super Famicom this year. The game's popularity started years ago, with the Japanese version for the Sega Master System, and has gone from strength to strength since then. The big boost came when the first two *Ys* games were converted onto the PC Engine CD ROM, where their popularity steadily began to build, leading to both animation videos and manga being based on the series. This latest version (*Ys IV*) first appeared on CD for the Engine last year, and (as far as we can tell) the Super Famicom version looks like being a straight conversion of this onto a 12 Mbit cart. While the third game in the series was criticised on both the Super NES *and* PC Engine for its limited scope and controversial side-on viewpoint, this new version goes back to the more familiar top-down style as seen in most RPGs (see the special RPG feature elsewhere this issue for some ideas on why the Japanese are particularly fond of this). No release date has been set as yet, but expect a US translation to follow.

These lovely character shots don't actually come from the game at all, but one of many spin-off anime videos.



This bit's from the game, though – it's Adol, our hero, in a typical top-down viewed scene. The side-on experiment of *Ys III* has been abandoned.

CHART THROB

THE TOP TENS WITH ATTITUDE!

Check out the Super Nintendo games that the rest of the world are playing this month on this, our charts page. We're here to tell you what's hot and what's not across the globe...

OFFICIAL PENGUIN GALLUP UK CHART

▲ UP ▼ DOWN ▶ NON MOVER ★ NEW ENTRY

Compiled for *Super Play* by Gallup

1 ▶ **SUPER MARIO KART** Nintendo
In its third week at number one, and deservedly so in our opinion. 93%

2 ★ **PRINCE OF PERSIA** Konami
A hugely enjoyable classic platform game with a prince in it. 89%

3 ▶ **PILOTWINGS** Nintendo
Still in its number three slot, this is a truly original game and a must-buy. 92%

4 ▼ **BART'S NIGHTMARE** Acclaim
Slipping down the chart, but still a good fun release with superb graphics. 91%

5 ▲ **SPIDERMAN & THE X-MEN** LJN
Spidey rescues his X-pals from the nasty Arcade in this (ahem) web of intrigue. 72%

6 ★ **SUPER MARIO PAINT** Nintendo
A painting package that's fun for a while, but really only for the younger players. 55%

7 ▼ **SUPER GHOULS 'N GHOSTS** Nintendo
Frustratingly difficult to play but with some great graphics. 85%

8 ▲ **SUPER PROBOTECTOR** Konami
Explosive action from a well hard platform shoot-'em-up 90%

9 ▼ **SUPER MARIO WORLD** Nintendo
He's still here. That fat Italian plumber just will not give up. 94%

10 ▼ **SUPER SOCCER** Nintendo
Good fun to play, but it doesn't bear much relation to football as we know it. 83%

What more can we say? *Mario Kart's still* number one.

Jez's jolly effort at colouring in with *Mario Paint.*

Oops! The Prince has just met with a rather nasty end.

UK IMPORT CHART

Compiled for *Super Play* by Console Concepts

1 **STARFOX** Nintendo (JAP)
2 **SUPER STAR WARS** JVC (JAP/US)
3 **ASSAULT SUITS VALKEN** NCS Masiya (JAP)
4 **TINY TOONS** Konami (JAP)
5 **BATMAN RETURNS** Konami (JAP)
6 **DESERT STRIKE** Electronic Arts (JAP)
7 **KIKIKAIKAI** Natsume (JAP)
8 **F1 GRAND PRIX II** Video System (JAP)
9 **RANMA 1/2 PART TWO** NCS Masiya (JAP)
10 **JAKI CRUSH PINBALL** Naxat (JAP)

Starfox: The first game to use the Super FX chip.

Kikikaikai: A weird, but fun game with a raccoon in it.

Starfox has raced into the number one slot, and we're not at all surprised – it's an absolutely stunning game which we've been playing non-stop in the *Super Play* offices. Check out our six-page review of this superb shoot-'em-up on page 34 for details. Also new in the UK Import Chart this month is *Batman Returns* – we review this excellent beat-'em-up on page 40. *Kikikaikai*'s another newie – this is a very strange, but enormously enjoyable, shoot-'em-up that could only have come from Japan, as could the fab anime-based *Ranma 1/2 Part Two*.

JAPANESE CHART

Compiled for *Super Play* by Tai Ono

1 **SUPER TETRIS 2 + BOMBLISS** Bullet-Proof Software
2 **FINAL FANTASY V** Square Soft
3 **SUPER MARIO KART** Nintendo
4 **STREET FIGHTER II** Capcom
5 **DRAGON QUEST V** Enix
6 **JUVENILE HERO'S WORLD** Square Soft
7 **GHOST KITARO** Bandai
8 **TINY TOONS ADVENTURES** Konami
9 **SUPER MARIO WORLD** Nintendo
10 **GODDESS REINCARNATION** Atlus

Tetris + Bombliss: This'll keep you happy for ages.

Dragon Quest V: The Japanese are mad about it.

A very addictive and fun puzzle game on any system, *Tetris + Bombliss* has converted well to the Super Nintendo, losing none of its appeal. The Japanese are absolutely nuts about it – it's even pushed *Final Fantasy V* off the number one slot. *Dragon Quest V* remains high in the charts – not surprisingly, as *DQ*'s the most popular game series ever over there at the moment. *Ghost Kitaro* is proving to be another big seller for Bandai. By the way, expect to see *Doraemon* entering the Japanese chart next month. (See Eyecatch this issue for a bit more info on these last two games.)

AMERICAN CHART

Compiled for *Super Play* by Woody Carter

1 **STREET FIGHTER II** Capcom
2 **SUPER MARIO KART** Nintendo
3 **SUPER STAR WARS** JVC
4 **BUSTER BUSTS LOOSE** Konami
5 **JOHN MADDEN '93** Electronic Arts
6 **DESERT STRIKE** Electronic Arts
7 **CAL RIPKEN BASEBALL** Mindscape
8 **BULLS VS BLAZERS** Electronic Arts
9 **LETHAL WEAPON** Ocean
10 **SUPER MARIO PAINT** Nintendo

Buster Busts Loose: Full of brilliant expressions...

Street Fighter II: Aren't you bored of this *yet*?

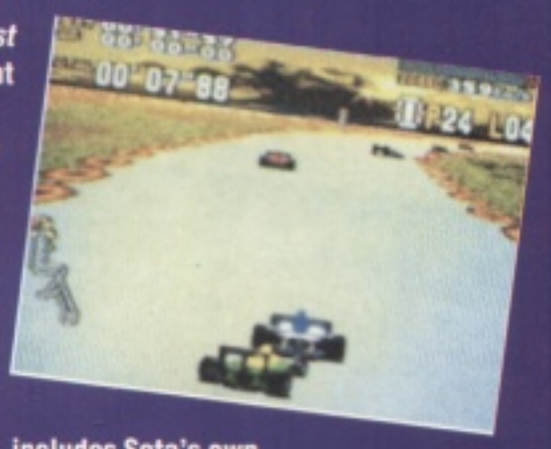
Street Fighter II and *Super Mario Kart* are holding firmly on to the top two slots in the American chart again this month. The gorgeous and very funny *Tiny Toons* makes its debut, but under its alternative US title of *Buster Busts Loose*. Sports games are heavily featured again, with three from Electronic Arts; the Americans seem completely obsessed with them. Perhaps the most surprising entry is *Lethal Weapon* – we only gave it 57% in our review in issue 6, and there are so many other better shoot-'em-ups than this on the market, in our opinion.

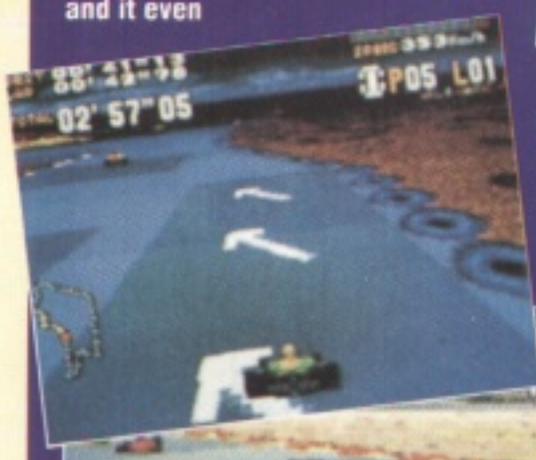
TWO DRIVING GAMES TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

(And they're *not* both Japanese!)

F1 Exhaust Heat II
(Seta)

You'll have seen the first *Exhaust Heat* game, no doubt, and might even have liked it to some extent. We weren't exactly overawed ourselves, mainly because of the ridiculous handling of the other cars and the terribly bland courses. The sequel looks a lot better, though, and it even





includes Seta's own custom chip to accelerate the Mode 7 graphics and scale the sprites smoothly. With a choice of 32 courses and real-life drivers' abilities to compete against, *Exhaust Heat II* could just be the Formula One driving game you're looking for. (Then again, cast your eyes to the right and you'll see it has a competitor...) We'll take it for a ride in our June issue.

F1 Exhaust Heat II: The graphics are a distinct improvement over the first game.

Nigel Mansell's F1 Championship
(Infocom/Gremlin)

Nige fans still stung from his decision to retire from Formula One racing will, no doubt, be ecstatic to hear that Gremlin's new driving game is just becoming available on Japanese import. The game takes an in-the-driver's-seat viewpoint, which is in contrast to *Exhaust Heat II*'s from-behind-the-car one, and races are run over four laps, with all the major F1 tracks being accurately reproduced.

Within the wealth of options you can either take part in a full championship season (with the passwords keeping a record of your position), or even go to Nige's own driving school to improve your skills. Gremlin's game has the most coin-op-like graphics we've seen for

ages, and is rather like a variation on Sega's *Super Monaco Grand Prix* on the Mega Drive – only much better. The UK version is set to appear at the end of May and will be published by Gremlin themselves. We'll have a review next issue!

Nigel Mansell's F1 Championship: Really fast and really smooth.

DATEBOOK

You'll never need to miss an important game release date again!

Eyestrain ahoy! Once again it's time to get out your magnifying glass and peer at *Super Play*'s complete listing of every Super Nintendo game that's coming out everywhere in the world over the next couple of months.

MONTH	DATE	GAME TITLE	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER	COUNTRY
April	2	Air Management 2	strategy	Koei	Jap
April	3	Captain Tsubasu IV	sports	Tecmo	Jap
April	16	Dual Orb	RPG	I'max	Jap
April	23	Ernald	RPG	Game Plan 21	Jap
April	28	Super Bomber Man	action	Hudson Soft	Jap
April	early	The Mah Jong Spirits	board game	Video System	Jap
April	early	Breath Of Fire	RPG	Capcom	Jap
April	mid	Action Pachio	action	Coconuts Japan	Jap
April	late	Super Slapshot	sports	Altron	Jap
April	–	Super Battletank	arcade	Pak-in Video	Jap
April	–	Laplus	RPG	Yanoman	Jap
April	–	Super Dunk Star	sports	Sammy	Jap
April	–	Super Chinese World 2	RPG	Culture Brain	Jap
April	–	SD Fist Of The Winged Dragon	beat-'em-up	Culture Brain	Jap
April	–	Dansalv	RPG	Yutaka/Bandai	Jap
April	–	Holy Sword Legend 2	RPG	Squaresoft	Jap
April	–	Bubsy	platform	Accolade	US
April	–	Shadowrun	RPG	Data East	US
April	–	Suzuki F1	driving	Nintendo	UK
April	–	Blues Brothers	platform	Nintendo	UK
April	–	Chessmaster	strategy	Mindscape	UK
April	–	King Arthur's World	puzzle	Jaleco	UK
April	–	Magic Sword	beat-'em-up	Capcom	UK
April	–	Pebble Beach Golf	sports	Nintendo	UK
April	–	Super Double Dragon	beat-'em-up	Nintendo	UK
April	–	Super Pang	action	Capcom	UK
April	–	Super Star Wars	action	JVC	UK
April	–	World League Basketball	sports	Nintendo	UK
April	–	Wing Commander	shoot-'em-up	Mindscape	UK
April	–	Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt	platform	Ocean	UK

***Action Pachio* from Coconuts – an odd-looking platform game.**

***Bar Code Battler* – the first game to use Epoch's new barcode adaptor.**

May	14	Bar Code Battler	strategy	Epoch	Jap
May	14	Goliath	–	BBS	Jap
May	21	NBA All-star Challenge	sports	Acclaim Japan	Jap
May	28	Pachinko	simulation	KSS	Jap
May	29	Starwing	shoot-'em-up	Nintendo	UK
May	late	Mother 2	RPG	Nintendo	Jap
May	–	Sangokushi Spirits	strategy	Wolf Team	Jap
May	–	Septentrion	action	Human	Jap
May	–	Silver Saga 2	RPG	Seta	Jap
May	–	Final Fight II	beat-'em-up	Capcom	Jap
May	–	Soccer	sports	Sunsoft	Jap
May	–	Inindo: Way Of The Ninja	RPG	Koei	US
May	–	Terminator	shoot-'em-up	Mindscape	UK
May	–	Warpspeed	shoot-'em-up	Accolade	UK

Sorry May's looking a bit thin – we'll have more news on it next month, hopefully. And, as, usual, things might change here and there in the meantime, depending on how the publishers feel.

KONAMI SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM KONAMI SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM KONAMI SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

WARNING! Accept the role of Buster Bunny in this latest Tiny Toon Adventure and you'll find yourself in all kinds of bizarre adventures. Six new wacky levels with five extra sub-games between each level!

Original Nintendo Seal of Quality

TINY TOON Adventures

BUSTER BUSTS LOOSE!™

You'll need your lucky Rabbit Foot, along with Buster's brand new Spin Kick and Mad Dash, if you're to make it all the way through to the last level, where you must rescue Princess Babs Bunny (no relation), who has been kidnapped by the hideous Milky Way Imperial Army.

KONAMI

Distributed by Konami - 269 Field End Road, Eastcote, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 9LS.

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SUPER PLAY Interview

Jez San, Argonaut

INTERVIEW SPECIAL

By Jason Brookes & Matt Bielby

Left: Jez San, managing director of Argonaut. 'Smile Jez, think of all that money!' Below: Kristar Wombell, Peter Warnes, Carl Graham, and, of course, Jez San all played a major role in the development of *Starfox*.

THIS MONTH, A LONG CHAT WITH ONE OF THE BIGGEST NAMES IN SUPER NES GAMING – JEZ SAN, THE GUY BEHIND STARFOX

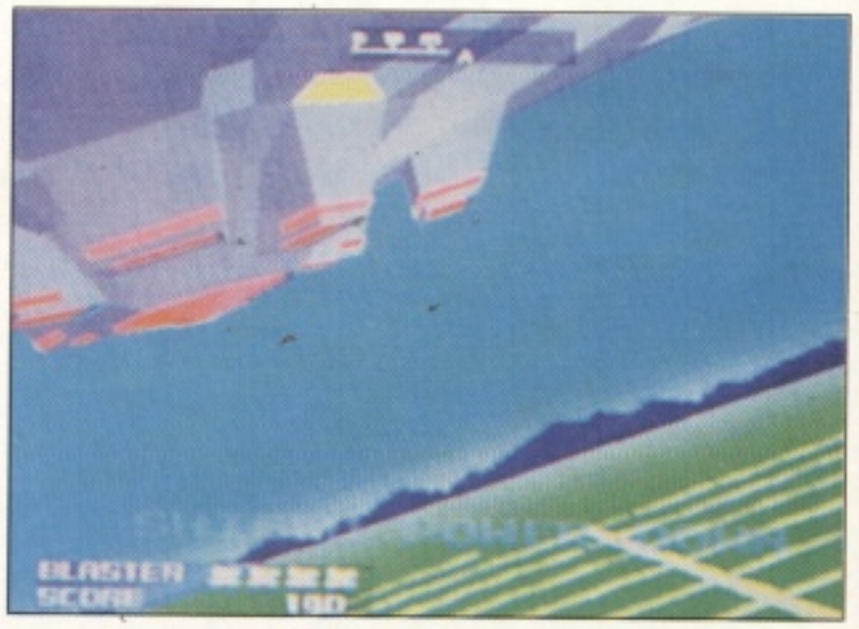
Jez San is the founder of Argonaut, one of the world's most celebrated developers of solid 3D games. After many successes on PC and Amiga (including *Stargliders 1 & 2*, *ATAC* and *Birds Of Prey*), the team have now turned much of their attention to the Super Nintendo, developing not only the brand new Super FX chip, allowing the Super NES to handle previously unthinkable 3D routines, but also helping to develop the first game to use it – *Starfox*. Check out our huge review on page 34, but before that, here's the man himself to explain to us exactly how it's all been made possible. Just maybe he'll let us in on a few secrets, too.

Q Okay, Jez – first things first. For those readers who haven't been around for donkey's years like we have, who exactly are Argonaut, and why should Nintendo have entrusted you with such an important project as *Starfox*?

A Well, I started Argonaut when I was at school, about 11 years ago, and we've slowly built it up from there. I'm 27 now. Most of the big games that people remember us for are the 3D ones – things like the *Stargliders* and *Birds Of Prey* – but we've actually done lots of other stuff too, and not all 3D. We did some versions of *Days Of Thunder* and *Loopz*, for instance, and we've recently done *King Arthur's World* for Jaleco, which isn't 3D at all – very 2D, in fact. We also had a hand in *Space Football*, which was one of the very first Super Nintendo games, and really lousy – I don't know why I'm telling you this, actually. It was a bit of an experiment, I suppose. Let's just forget about it, shall we? Anyway, Nintendo gave us this recent project because we had impressed them with both our hardware expertise and programming on all three of their systems. It's that simple, but that doesn't mean it was an easy project to secure.

Q Before we go into details, how big is Argonaut now? How many people have you got working for you?

A Currently we've got two teams – a hardware division and a software division – which both add up to close on 60 people. That makes us probably the biggest developers in the UK, I think – at least, the biggest developers who have everyone working in-house. The real problem with using lots of freelance people, who do all their work from home, is that they can't all help each other out on big projects very easily – the only way we could do something like *Starfox* and the Super FX chip is to have lots of people in the same place working together, being able to bounce ideas off each other all the time.



Top: Atari's 3D coin-op *Solvalou* was one of the games that inspired *Starfox*. Above: *Starglider 2* on the Amiga – one of Argonaut's successful 3D games.

Above: *King Arthur's World* (reviewed last issue) was developed by Argonaut at the same time as *Starfox*. Right: Before that they had a brief hand in the 3D *Ballblazer* clone, *Space Football*.

Q Okay, let's talk about the Super FX chip. Did you go to Nintendo with it, did Nintendo come to you, or what? Basically, what's the story behind it?

A Our original idea was to do something not unlike the Super FX chip, but actually for the NES. This was back in 1990, before the Super Famicom had even been released in Japan, and we were kicking around ways of accelerating NES graphics. The problem we had was that we could get it going really fast all right, but the resolution and especially the colours were so limited it still looked awful. Despite all this, we went as far as to show Nintendo a version of *Starglider* running on the NES and they were suitably impressed with the speed of the game and also with its simple shoot-'em-up design. However, because the technical abilities of the NES were getting a little bit outdated compared to other formats such as the Mega Drive and PC Engine, Nintendo suggested we looked at their 16-bit machine, the long-awaited Super Famicom.

Q You actually got to work on the Super Famicom even before it went on sale?

A Yes, we were given a Super Famicom back in June 1990, which was about six months before it went on sale in Japan. I think Nintendo had liked our ability to reverse-engineer the NES hardware and put impressive software onto it without using one of their development systems. The Japanese do things by the book far more than we do over here, and that sort of thing makes Nintendo sit up and take notice. Anyway, after the Chicago Consumer Electronics Show (CES) that year we started looking at the new machine and we immediately transferred the NES version of *Starglider* onto it. It took about a week, if I remember correctly. I guess we showed real enthusiasm and commitment to the hardware side of things, and because we'd seen the DSP chip they had for *Pilotwings* (*see special chips feature in issue 4 – Ed.*), we suggested doing something similar – but custom designed to handle 3D polygons, sprite rotation and the like instead. Nintendo in Japan took a lot of convincing, if the truth be told, and eventually it was the American office that gave us the go ahead and the funding to continue. I think they're just much more conservative in Japan – it's the nature of the beast.

"We'd seen the DSP chip for *Pilotwings*, and suggested doing something similar."

Starfox made its debut at the Las Vegas CES back in January this year. The game was displayed inside a huge dome packed with TVs and was an instant hit. Jez lapped it all up, of course!

Q Would it not have been possible to fund the development of the chip yourselves and go ahead on your own?

A Not a chance. Developing something this specialist is incredibly expensive in terms of both the equipment and the expertise required. Without some serious financial backing it would have been virtually impossible. And, naturally, it would have been a very risky investment, too – there was always the chance that the finished product might not have been used.

Q Let's get technical for a minute. How fast does the thing update the screen, and how fast does the processor run?

A The frame rate is, er, quick enough to be fun. It's fast enough that the game isn't jerky. To be honest it changes quite a lot throughout the game – it can go up to 30 frames per second when there's not many polygons on screen, but the game almost never achieves that, because we wanted to get a lot more detail in. I guess it mostly goes at 15/20 frames a second, which is still fast enough to prevent things getting jerky. The processor in *Starfox* runs at 10.15 megahertz, which isn't actually all that fast, but as it's a Reduced Instruction Set (RISC) chip – dedicated to handling 3D polygons, texture mapping and so on for gameplaying – it's effectively as impressive as most PCs can manage. The chip *can* run faster than it does in *Starfox*, but the 16-bit architecture of the Super Nintendo restricts it slightly. Essentially, the whole thing is faster than a 286 PC, and about on a par with a 386 PC, at least as far as gameplaying is concerned.

Q What kind of deal do you now have with Nintendo for Super Nintendo games?

A We have a contract with them to do a series of 3D games – and no, before you ask, I can't tell you anything about what the others will be, except that they're both on schedule to be released towards the end of this year. The very worst that could happen is that one of them will be pushed over into '94', but I hope that isn't going to happen. We *are* doing work for other publishers too though, and you'll be seeing a fair number of games from us over the next year or so.

Q How did your relationship with Nintendo work on *Starfox*? Who did what?

A *Starfox* actually began from something we had started doing on the Super FX chip much earlier. Our original plan was for something far more open-plan, rather like our old *Starglider* games with a true 3D environment that had to be explored by the player. Nintendo, however, wanted the first Super FX game to appeal to games players of all types, so they designed something much more accessible but with enough depth to interest players who were already familiar with these kind of graphics.

"All the artwork, character and spaceship design was done by Nintendo in Japan."

Much of the game's programming – the 3D maths routines and the basic game engine – was done by Argonaut, both here in the UK and also by some of our guys who are working at Nintendo's HQ in Japan. All the artwork, character design and spaceship design was done by Nintendo in Japan, with a

Right: Nintendo's Miyamoto San – top game designer.

Left: New recruit Neil Jackson (left), ex- of our sister mag *Amiga Format*, and now software development boss, with colleague John Dean.

Top: Mark Washbrook tests a new improved version of *Home Alone 2* for THQ. Above: Peter Warnes on the set of *Starfox*.

'Just act natural,' says Jason. 'There must be a few questions I haven't asked yet. Er, what's your favourite colour?' (*Doit! – Ed.*)

> "Nintendo have a knack of producing games that appeal to everyone, and I think we've started to see how they do it."

team of programmers under the direction of none other than Shigeru Miyamoto. (*See interview in issue 2 – Ed.*) This guy is simply the best producer of video games in the world today, and he's the chap responsible for all of the classic stuff like *Mario* and *Zelda*. By the way, while I was in Japan I learned that he had been responsible for *Super Mario Kart* too, but that had actually been a shorter project than most.

Anyway, Nintendo committed a lot of their game designers to the *Starfox* project. We had about 10 or 12 people working on the Super FX chip, and six doing *Starfox* itself, while Nintendo committed another 10 game designers, a couple of musicians and so on. It was very much a joint effort, and it's the first time they've worked so closely with a company outside of Japan.

Q Do you think you've learned much from working with them?

A Oh yes! I think we've learned a great deal from their design philosophy – their way of doing games. Most flight sims are cult things, which you either like or you don't – Nintendo have the knack of producing games that will appeal to everyone, and I think we've started to see how they do it. With *Starfox* they wanted something with the same feel as the big coin-ops of the day, which at the time of conception were Namco's *Starblade* and Atari's *Solvalou*. In these games the player doesn't have to worry too much about *where* they are heading, just *what* they are going to shoot along the way. Certainly, this is the first game we've ever done where I've been catching the programmers bunking off work to play it!

Q Did you ever think: 'Oh no! Why have Nintendo smothered our serious space shoot-'em-up with cute, fluffy animals?'

A Ha ha! There might have been a bit of that at the start, but I actually think the characters work really well – they won't be enough to put off the high tech gameplayers who might not really go for cute animal games, but they'll attract lots of new people who've never played a 3D game before. Nintendo are very keen on characterising their games, and take this kind of thing very seriously. For example, the character models Nintendo used in the promotional material were rumoured to have cost around £100,000 to create. There's even a *Starfox* comic inside one of the US Nintendo magazines. Most importantly, the characters in *Starfox* create a team-like feel and add a bit of humour too – another element that Nintendo try to include in every game's design.

Q Do you think future games will be more like the 3D stuff you get on PCs or whatever?

A I believe we'll see all sorts of games. This is a real entry level 3D game to get people who wouldn't normally play them into the idea of 3D, but later games will probably explore the potential of 3D a bit more. In *Starfox* you can only influence the direction you fly in to a limited extent, but in future games you'll be able to look behind you, or fly or drive in any direction you want.

I really think 3D games are going to be very important in the future. There's all sorts of potential for 3D stuff – the Japanese are really into RPGs, and you could do a great *Dungeon Master*-style game using the Super FX chip. What *I'd* like to see is a sort of 3D version of *Super Mario World*, where you view things from just behind the Mario character maybe, as in *Starfox*.

Q How much do Super FX chips cost? Will games that use them be much more expensive than normal games?

A A *Starfox* cart costs slightly more to make than a *Street Fighter II* cart. However, its US price has just been confirmed at $60 (about £40), so it looks like Nintendo want to price it competitively. You could squeeze a 16 Mbit game like *Street Fighter II* into 8 Mbit using a Super FX chip, so you could save a bit of money there too. (*And* Starfox *will apparently sell for around £40 in the UK as well, which can't be bad – Ed.*)

Q What do you know about games from other companies that will be using the Super FX chip? Who's working on what?

A Nintendo held a developer's conference on 1 February in Seattle, where they showed the Super FX chip and other stuff. Lots of developers seemed interested, but I can't comment on anything specific that they're doing.

Q Oh, go on.

A Well, it's 3D polygon stuff, but you can do other things with the chip as well. You could do really good pseudo-3D games – you know, like *Afterburner* or *OutRun* – with lots of sprite scaling and stuff. You could combine Super FX 3D with a Mode 7 backdrop, which can be done. You know the backgrounds in *Starfox* – they're just ordinary Super Nintendo screens, nothing to do with our Super FX chip at all. Or you could use it to have lots of sprites on screen without any slowdown. Loads of stuff.

Q Finally, does the Super FX chip play any part in the forthcoming CD ROM system, and what CD ROM development are you involved in?

A The 32-bit processor in the CD unit is entirely different from the Super FX's, and is actually made by NEC. As the specifications still haven't been finalised, many things are still up in the air, but that doesn't mean we're not already developing stuff for Nintendo's CD platform. Our programmers have developed one of the most advanced data compression systems around, and we can now get full motion video on *any* CD system with movie-quality smoothness (about 30 frames per second). When Nintendo's CD system finally appears, most likely early next year, you can bet we'll have some of the very first games for it.

Jez, thank you for your time.

The UK version of *Starfox* – which will actually be called *Starwing* (apparently there are a couple of European games on 8-bit computers with the name *Starfox*) – will be released on 29 May, at the proposed price of £40. (Could this possibly mark a change of heart in Nintendo's UK pricing policy?) Now turn to page 34 for a full review of *Starfox*.

If you squint... (*Stop it! – Ed.*) Nintendo's HQ in Kyoto, Japan where several of Argonaut's programmers were taken in-house to work with top game designer Miyamoto San.and his renowned development team. The project: *Starfox*.

WORK IN PROGRESS

While Argonaut are certainly committed to Super Nintendo development, they are also developing software for a number of other major platforms including the Mega CD, the newly announced 3DO system, and CD ROM development for the PC.

Lewis Gordon is involved with CD development at Argonaut. 'No, you can't take a picture of this, I'm afraid.'

'Oi! I said no pictures!' A scuffle breaks out as Lewis wrestles with *Super Play* photographer Rob and then falls for the old 'Oh I've run out of film ...' trick. This is as close as he got.

Jaid Mindang works on the sprites and animations for *Ren And Stimpy*, a licence that Argonaut are working on for THQ. On the PC, both the cartoon and sprite animations can be viewed side-by-side. Nice friends, Jaid.

Ren And Stimpy, an immensely popular American cartoon with humour similar to that of *The Simpsons*.

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MEGA DRIVE – The Sega Mega Drive is the ultimate computer game console, fully utilizing for the first time the awesome power of the latest 16 bit technology. **MEGA GRAPHICS** – The Sega Mega Drive reproduces the graphic quality of specially designed arcade machines costing many times as much. **MEGA SOUND** – The Sega Mega Drive even has real stereo sound, making the greatest games even greater.

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Answer:
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B) Horse
C) Hedgehog

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Answer: A) America B) Japan C) Australia

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Answer: A) 40 B) 4 C) 15

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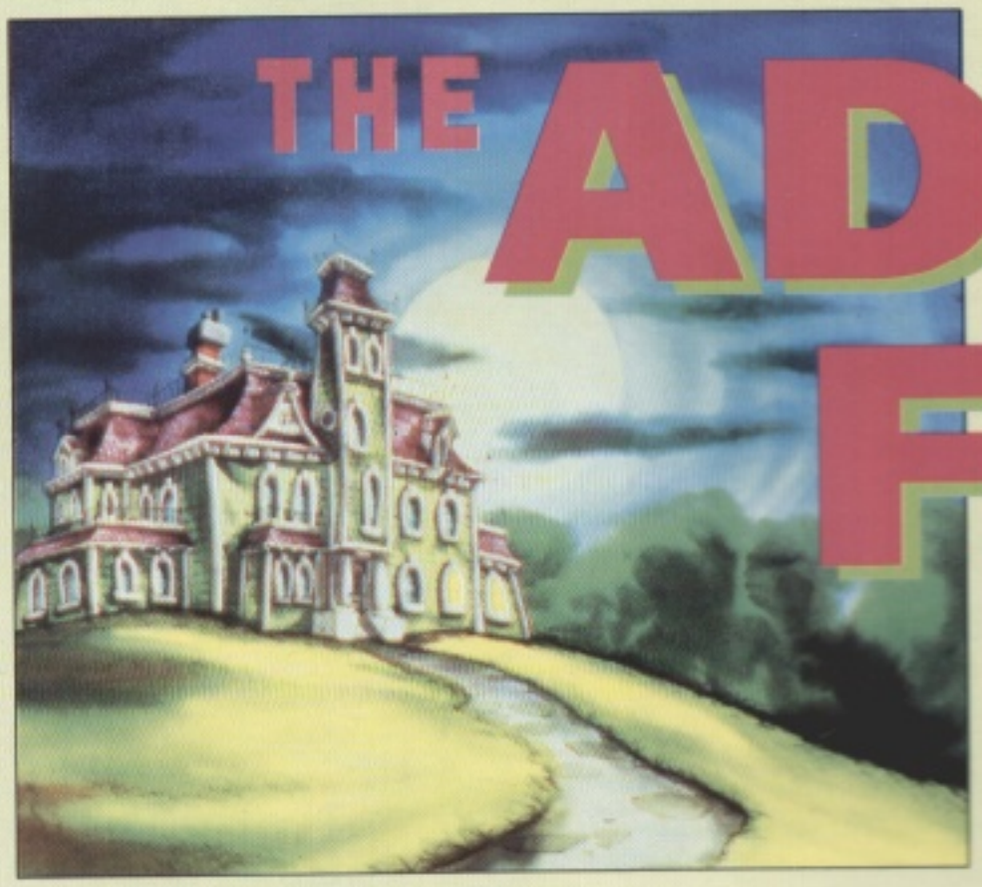


THE ADDAMS FAMILY

IN: PUGSLEY'S SCAVENGER HUNT

They're cree– (*No, no, NO! Start again! – Ed.*) Er... Ocean, eh? Not content with releasing one really good *Addams Family* game, they've now gone and done another one. Only this time it's based on a cartoon series – and it's even better looking than the first one!

UK Release

Game: The Addams Family In: Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt
Publisher: Ocean
Developer: In-house
Price: £44.99
Release: April
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

In the manner of so many recent Ocean platform games, *Pugsley* starts off in a hallway-type place, with doors leading off to the game's various levels. That means, rather wonderfully, that you can choose the order you play the game in – although a couple of levels are inaccessible until you've completed the first few.

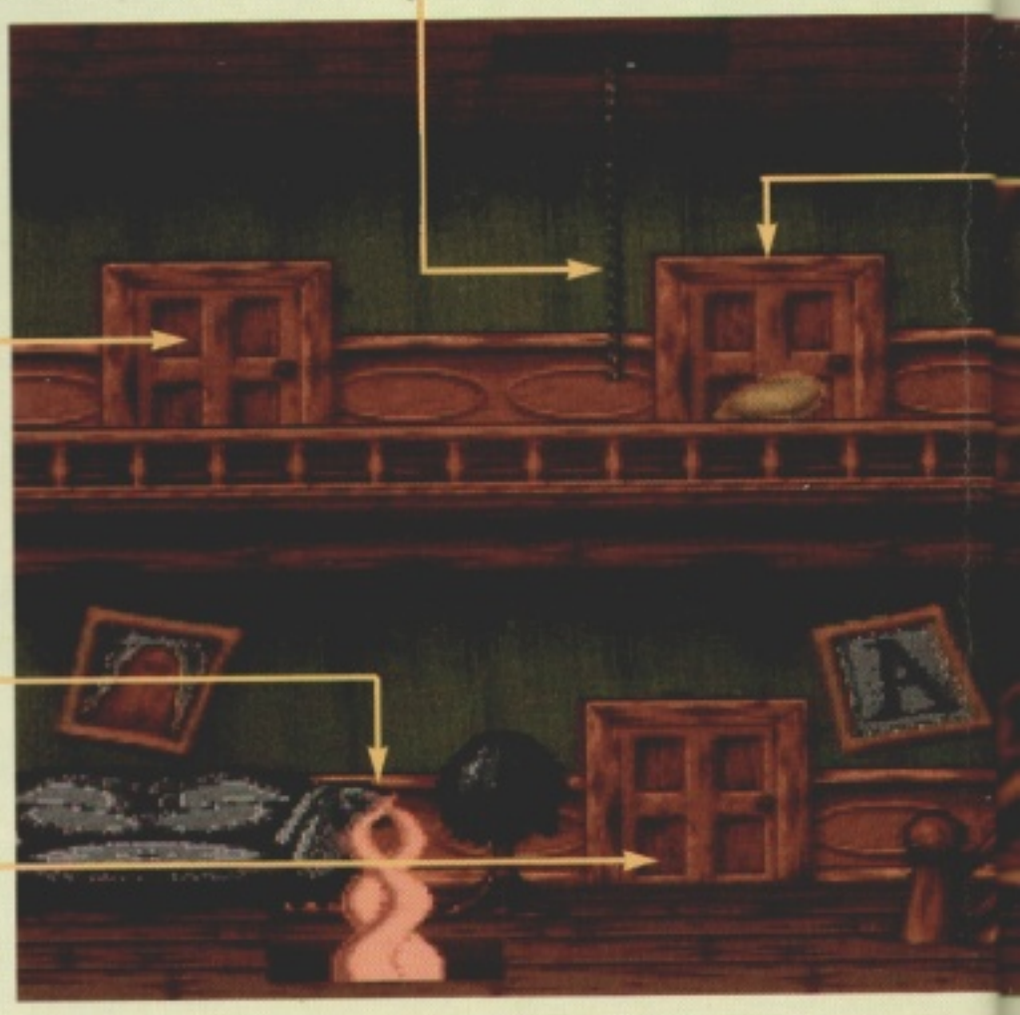
All you'll find through this door is Pugsley's sister, Wednesday, who's challenged him to find six objects she's hidden around the house.

Climb this rope to the attic, which is inhabited by mice and bats. There also seem to be lots of explosives up there – dynamite, exploding baddies, and cannons which fire projectiles you can ride on (if you're careful). And it's got a

really nice two-layer parallax background – something you'll have to take our word for, as they don't come out well in magazines.

The basement is guarded by a squiggly pink thing, who only disappears once you've done Uncle Fester's lab. It's all dark, and full of conveyor belts and tricky jumping bits.

This is the game's final level, which you can't enter until you've completed all the others. It's a slippery ice world where you've got to be careful to avoid sliding into spikes and things. At the risk of ruining the surprise, it contains some really dastardly puzzles involving lots of switches, and loads of invisible-platforms-that-only-materialise-when-you-land-on-them.



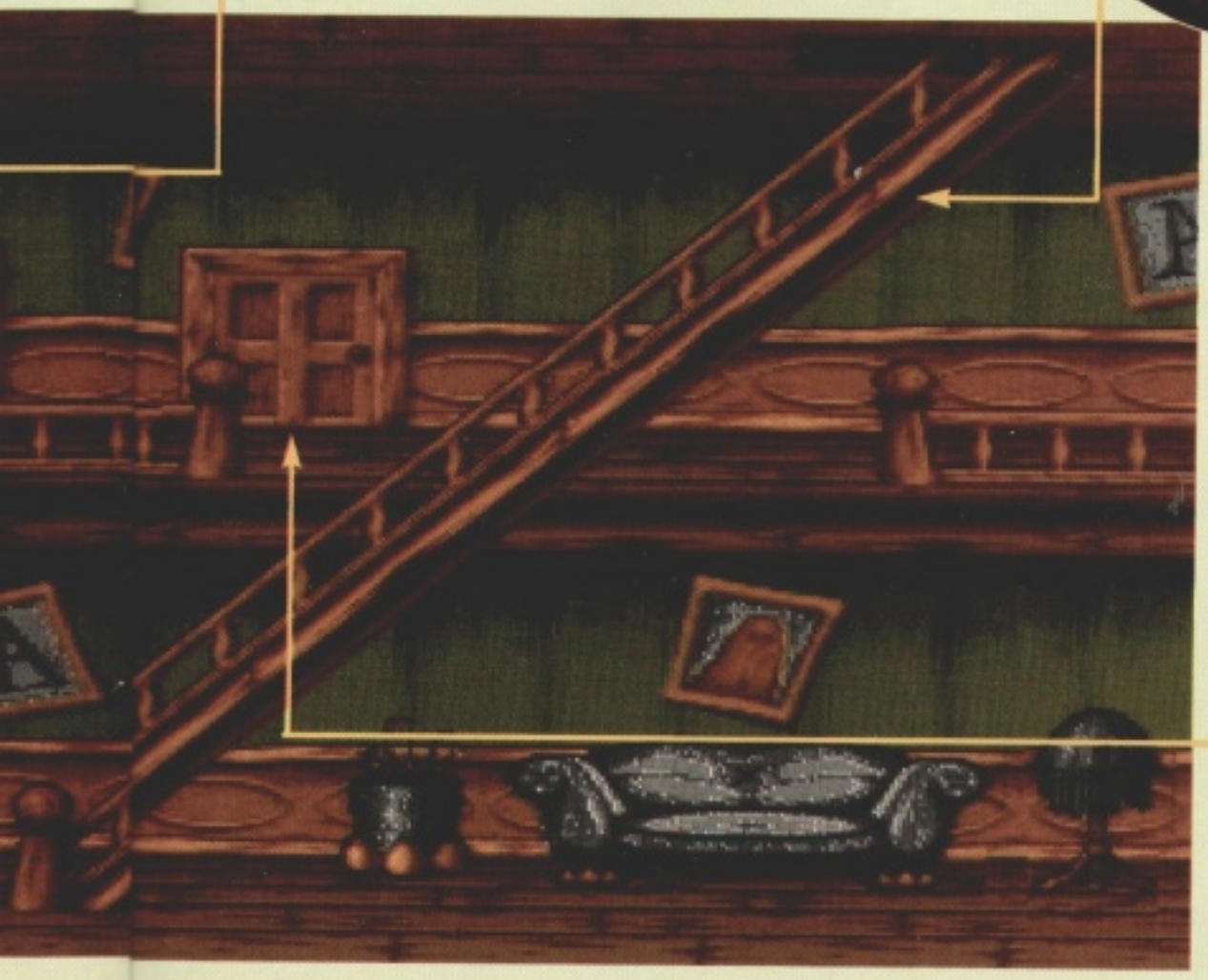
COME AND MEET THE FAMILY

While the first *Addams Family* game was loosely based on the film, this one's licensed from an American cartoon that isn't shown over here.

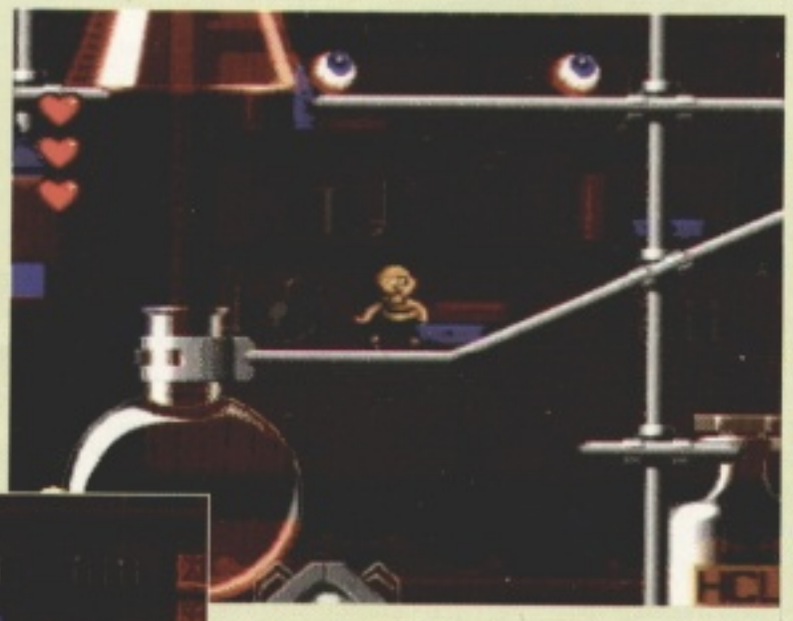
The cartoon's got all the same characters as in the film and the original TV series, but they're all tweaked a bit here and there (Uncle Fester apparently 'takes off his socks and reads his toenails'). The other difference is that the cartoon's actually quite funny.

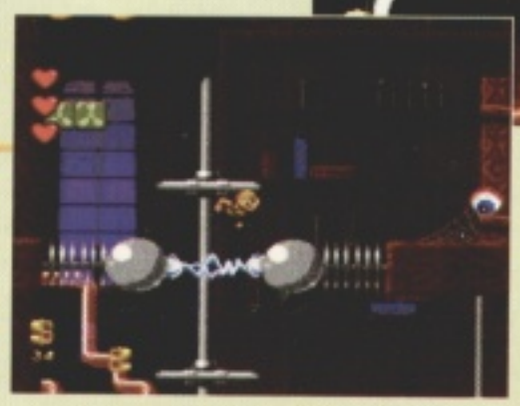
Through here's the bathroom, scene of another smashing background effect – lots of wobbly soap bubbles that float up the screen. Hazards to watch out for here include ducks and pools of pink – and very dangerous – bath water.

Up these stairs is, er, the other attic. And – wow! – the whole thing takes place in a crystal ball, under the gaze of Granny.



Here's Uncle Fester's laboratory, the scene of many a fiendish experiment. And, alarmingly, you've been shrunk down to pocket size...





This makes it a lot easier to slip between the test-tubes and clamp stands, but means a collision with a Bunsen burner spells instant death. Watch out, too, for escaped eyeballs, killer Van der Graff generators and these sort of funny green squidgy things.

THE VERY BEST BITS

There's more to *Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt* than simply jumping round platforms, dodging baddies and all that stuff. F'rixample...

Question marks make blocks appear and disappear. They're usually well worth collecting...

...except in this case, where your chances of picking up those dollars have now been scuppered somewhat.

In some places, this switches and puzzles business gets horribly out of hand, like here where you've got to jump on the question marks (which you might just be able to make out in the floor there) in exactly the right order. Listen for the sound effects, which will let you know if you're doing it right.

Here's a really neat bit. Hop onto the cannon balls and you can ride them across the screen...

...using your weight to guide them towards bits of wall that needs demolishing.

UNEXPECTED PLEASURES

The game's positively awash with secret bits. You can hardly move an inch without stumbling into a hidden room, or chancing upon a load of bonus points. So it's worth exploring every corner of every room, walking into every suspicious-looking bit of wall and generally just keeping your eyes peeled.

Here's a complicated one. It's reached by creeping through an invisible hole in the wall to the left of Pugsley, which can only be done if you avoid the question mark on the left of the screen.

The simplest source of bonus points is simply jumping around in places you wouldn't think of jumping.

It's also worth walking into walls – which quite often aren't walls at all.

And up there's the entrance to a full-blown secret room, brimming with dollars.

See?

Other bonuses are a bit more fiddly to reach. Here, for example, there's a platform which only...

...appears when you land on it (if you see what we mean). Having done that, you can pick up lots of extra points.

The truly amazing thing about *The Addams Family* is that, although it's blimming difficult, it's difficult in a completely fair and above board way. If you lose a life, it's always your own fault, never the game design's, and you're never sent back too far before being given a chance to try again. (This is in stark contrast to Ocean's other recent platform game, *Lethal Weapon*, in which the slightest slip – which itself could often be put down to sloppy programming – would send you right back to the start of a level.) In fact, the only really annoying bit we managed to find was here, where you've got to jump up off that swinging platform to get the question mark, and then land back on the platform. Miss, and you'll find yourself back at the beginning of the level, with very little chance of making it back up there again. Grr.

Families, eh? You put up with all their nonsense, you do everything you can to rescue them, and they put you into a cooking pot and hit you over the head with a mallet.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Did you like the original *Addams Family*? Then you'll like this – lots. It's one of those rare sequels that's better than the original in just about every conceivable way (and with the first *Addams* being no slouch either, that means it's some game).

One great thing about it is that it's the same as the original – but different. The characters, for instance, are the same (Pugsley, Gomez, etc), but rendered in a different way – as this is based on the cartoon series, they're all brighter, more colourful. The game structure is the same too – you're once again walking around a house, entering different areas which convert into levels. However, this time the graphics are more original, more varied – like the artist has had more fun with them. The parallax scrolling in the backgrounds is a sight to be seen – perhaps the best ever? – and many of the visual effects are simply stunning (check out the gorgeous Bunsen burner flames on the laboratory level, for instance, or the bubbles in the bathroom). The characters are great too – the baddy sprites are all true individuals, with the drowning cats, in particular, really making an impression on the soppier members of the *Super Play* team. This is one of those games that it's fun just to sit and watch, not only to play.

Happily, it succeeds in being brilliant fun to play too – if a bit hair-tearingly difficult at times. Gameplay is reminiscent of the frantic platform action of the first *Addams*, with many sequences appearing in new, improved forms. The cannon balls you have to stand on you'll know, for instance, as well as the look of many of the collectables (shiny dollar signs and so on). However, once again it's improved, particularly in the way it's presented – the level where the whole screen is dark, except for the area Pugsley stands in, or the bit seen in Granny's crystal ball, are real imaginative stand-outs.

Add to this brilliant sound (check the cat's miaows) and lovely full-screen character portraits (as good as anything the Japanese can do) and you've got a near-as-dammit perfect game. This is as good a platform game as anything Konami or Capcom have done, and a real must-buy. Well done, Ocean.

● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
93%	89%	90%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
85%		90%

VERDICT: Brilliant graphics, great sound, lots of inventive bits and a nicely pitched difficulty level add up to one of Ocean's best ever.

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you do you into allet.

One of the best bits of the game comes halfway through one of the levels. (We're not telling you which because, erm, we can't quite remember.) (*Clot! – Ed.*) Suddenly you find yourself underwater, dodging lots of snorkelling cats who make this really sweet 'miaow' sound.

Pugsley's quite an animated little fellow. He's very *well* animated, too. And he likes marmalade sandwiches.

A BIT OF A DEAD BOSS

Perhaps the only slightly disappointing aspect of *The Addams Family* concerns the bosses. They're not exactly brilliant. They're set against lovely backgrounds and everything, but killing them tends to involve simply jumping on their heads a couple of times. And they don't really fight back much.

This octopus spins round quite slowly. Jump on its head to kill it.

The giant mouse throws bits of cheese and smaller mice at you. Jump on its head to kill it.

The dragon breathes a bit of fire at you. Jump on its head to kill it.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

I've been sitting here for about a quarter of an hour now, trying to think of an interesting way to start this 'Good, Bad or Ugly?' box. But, short of giving you all that creepy/kooky spiel again, I can't. So what I'm going to do is simply point out that *Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt* is absolutely brilliant – which it is – and try to explain why.

The graphics might be a good starting point. I think I'm safe in saying that this is the best-looking platform game on the system (it certainly gives *Mickey's Magical Quest* a run for its money), and next time we do a 'Top 5 Super Nintendo Graphics' in What Cart? this is sure to feature. The backgrounds are perhaps the best thing about it – they do amazing things with parallax scrolling and Mode 7 – but the sprites and things are really nice too. And the colours... I'm not sure where Ocean's graphic artists found them all, but somehow they've managed to make the game sort of, erm, 'glow' in a way I've never encountered before. The music and sound-effects provide a fitting accompaniment, even if the tunes themselves aren't much cop.

And it's a thumbs up, a big smile and a reassuring wink for the game itself, too. It's been designed by people who really know what they're doing (the same people who did the original *Addams Family* game, in fact, who were interviewed in issue 2) and it shows. It's big, it's brimming with original ideas, and it's enormous fun to play. What's particularly nice is the way it does more than simply provide a route from the start to the finish – there are loads of extra bits and pieces to discover along the way if you keep your eyes open.

The game's really difficult, too. It's much harder than the original *Addams Family* (which I actually thought was pretty hard, but I know loads of people finished it in no time at all), it's much, much harder than *Mickey's Magical Quest* or *Super Mario World*, and it could be more than many people can handle. There are no passwords or anything, either, making it even harder still. But that's probably for the best, in view of *Mickey's* regrettable finishability.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
94%	90%	90%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
90%		90%

VERDICT: Quite simply one of the very best platform games on the Super Nintendo, and a triumph of British talent. Rule Britannia!

STARFOX

A new breed of game has arrived – the Super NES solid 3D game – with the help of the much publicised Super FX built-in cartridge chip and a fab new set of Nintendo characters. Buckle up and prepare for the space adventure of your lives...

Japanese/US Release

Game: Starfox (UK version: Starwing)
Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Argonaut/Nintendo
Price: £60-70 (ouch!)
Release: Jap: now/US: late March/ UK: April
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

This map shows the three different routes you can take to bad-guy planet Venom – each one getting progressively harder to do.

***Starfox* offers something completely different from most Super NES games – 3D polygon graphics. Solid 3D hasn't been exploited much on the SNES in the past, and the reason is obvious – the machine is hopeless at displaying them. (Look at *Race Drivin'* for proof.) *Starfox* is the first game to get around this by incorporating a custom chip to boost its abilities in this area. It's called the Super FX, and the things it's enabled the *Starfox* designers to do should become clear over the next few pages...**

Our patented film-strip type affair, angled jauntily across the side of the page, shows scenes from *Starfox*'s ace intro sequence.

THE STARFOX RAPID DEPLOYMENT FORCE: WHO *ARE* THESE GUYS?

The storyline of *Starfox* goes like this: The Cornerian government, threatened by baddies from neighbouring planet Venom, built themselves a brand new style of fighter ship – the Arwing. This, it turned out, was no ordinary piece of military hardware – but (almost too late) the Cornerians realised they didn't have anyone to fly the damn things. Just in time, a special team of ace pilots was selected from the hundreds of animal hybrids trained at the Galactic Military School Of Flying. Needless to say, only the top dogs made the grade. (Well, a fox, a rabbit, a frog and a hawk, to be exact.) The Starfox team are a Robin Hood-style bunch brought in just for this occasion. The following info is for operational use only.

PROFILE

Fox McCloud
Age: 25
Weight: 447 kg
Height: 152 cm
Species: Fox

Son of a great fighter pilot, Fox is the leader of the Starfox team – despite having been expelled from the prestigious Galactic Military School Of Flying. Fox is a courageous pilot, but his impetuousness often lands the team in tight spots.

PROFILE

Peppy Hare
Age: 34
Weight: 55 kg
Height: 143 cm
Species: Rabbit

Peppy is a bit of a father figure, who the others look up to. He's intelligent and responsible, but apparently his poor table manners have ruined his chances of promotion. In battle, Peppy looks after the others.

PROFILE

Slippy Toad
Age: 19
Weight: 46 kg
Height: 113 cm
Species: Frog

Slippy also graduated from the Galactic Military School Of Flying. He's a bit of a liability in battle – showing off with acrobatics when he should be guarding Fox's tail. He's a cheerful chap, and his broad Yorkshire accent is a source of amusement in the officer's mess.

PROFILE

Falco Ranvaldi
Age: 28
Weight: 51 kg
Height: 175 cm
Species: Hawk

We still know little about Falco's past. Well, apart from him being second in command to Fox that is. Oh yes, and the rogue has been spotted hanging out in singles bars on his nights off. Hmm. Could his surface arrogance be a cover for someone who's actually a shy and insecure hawk?

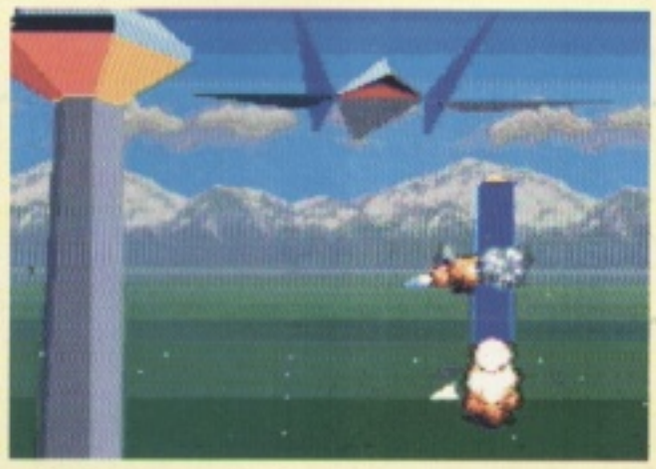
WARNING!

Imported copies of *Starfox* need a special adaptor to run on a UK machine (see Super Express). So it might be worth waiting for the UK release (called *Starwing*) that'll apparently only cost £40 (and be in English!), before splashing any cash.

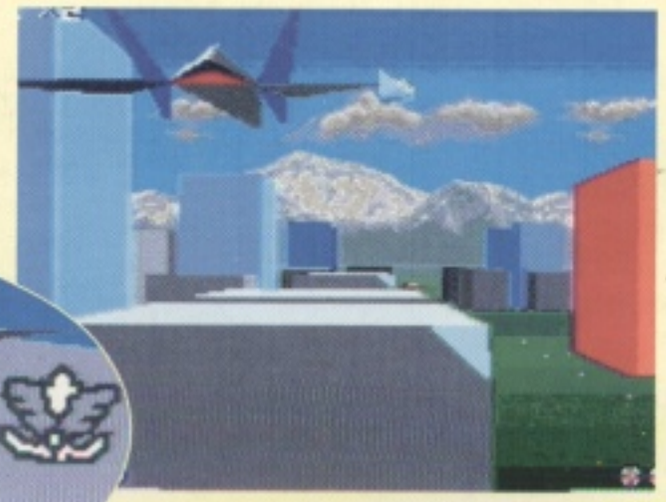
LEVEL ONE, STAGE ONE: CORNERIA

Corneria is the fleet base, and home to Fox, his chums and other Cornerians of all animal species. However, your home planet is under attack – and these guys don't mess about. As soon as your team is dispatched, you get locked into a series of dogfights. And then there are the falling buildings to beware of...

The training mode helps the rookie or all-round crap player (you know who you are) grasp the sensitive controls. The other Starfox guys talk to you, and assess your progress as you try and keep in formation and fly through a series of rings.



It's that tower with the revolving restaurant at the St John's Shopping Centre in Liverpool! The bases of these towers can be blown up.

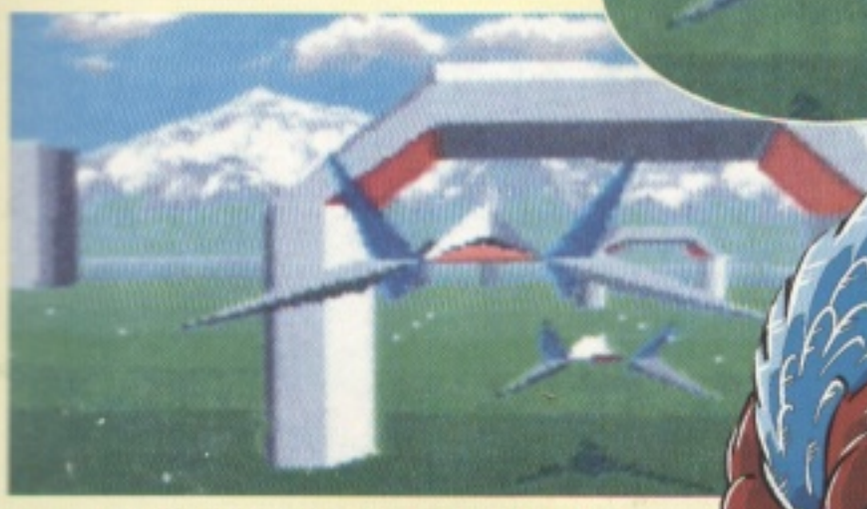


The end of level one is guarded by this huge boss – a Ground Drop Mothership that breaks off into segments the more it gets shot. Like most of the guardians, it has a few weak points.

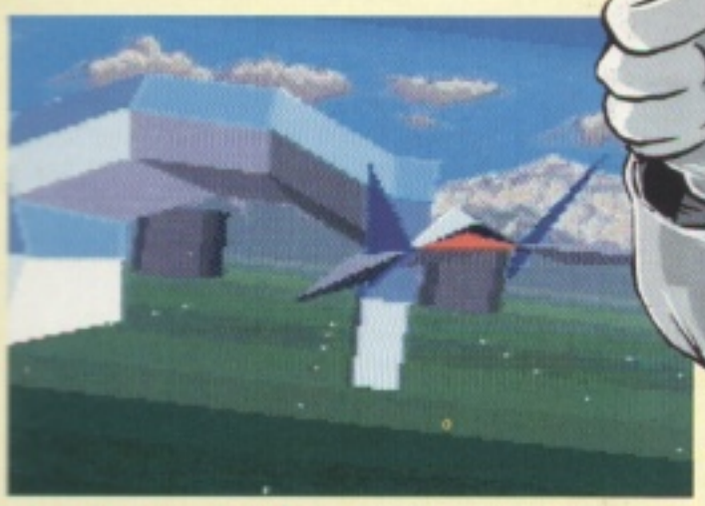
Brilliant explosions abound in *Starfox*, this one being a skyscraper going up in flames.

See that sign on the building? It's the mark of General Pepper, Fox's boss.

One of the most impressive effects on level one has to be when flying over these skyscrapers – the buildings seem to rise up from the ground. We've yet to see another SNES game that makes you sway around on your chair as much as this.



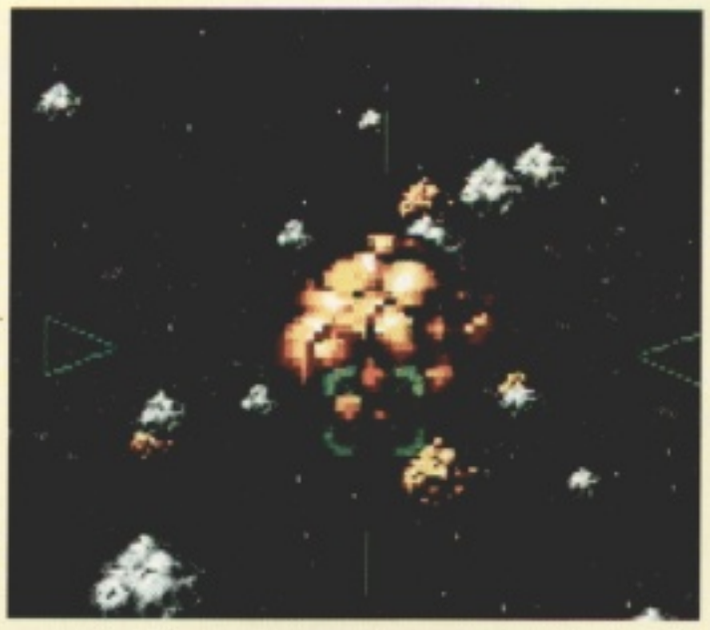
Okay, we're off. The fleet is deployed, and Fox and his pals have got to fly across the planet and take out the bad guys. In this stage, Slippy takes every opportunity to show off to Fox, zooming through the tunnels and arches shouting 'Look at me!' and 'Did you see me?' etc. It's tempting to blow him out of the sky yourself, but don't – he *is* your chum, after all.



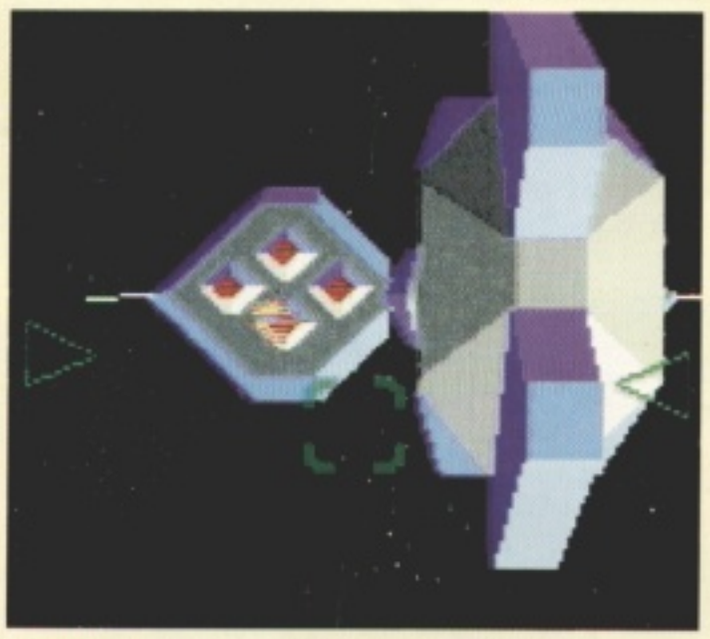
Many of the obstacles Fox can fly through do good things to your ship – like earn you points, or replenish your ship's shields. This particular one, however, doesn't give you anything, except maybe a quick thrill.

LEVEL ONE, STAGE TWO: THE ASTEROID BELT

A change of perspective marks this stage. It's actually possible to view most of the level from inside the Arwing fighter itself, though occasionally the viewpoint changes to from behind the craft (as on level one). A fairly standard Head-Up-Display, complete with cross-hairs, proves very effective for taking out the alien scum.



Watch out for asteroids on this level! The red ones can be blown to smithereens, fortunately, but the rest of them can't. If you successfully manage to shoot a combination of particular asteroids then you'll enter the Black Hole.



The end-of-level boss on this stage is this Asteroid Sweeper, which happens to be a fairly easy foe. Take out its diamond-shaped guns, and it won't last long. There's an amazing panoramic view to admire once this level's complete, too.

The Black Hole! This is a strange warp section, where many of the sprites found in the game hurtle towards you out of control. There are warp gates that transport you to various later sections in the game too – more often than not to an extremely difficult one on level three.

LEVEL ONE, STAGE THREE: THE ANDROSS SPACE ARMADA

This is the first time that slow-down rears it's ugly head in the game, but it's not too bad – the frame rate just goes right down, and things get a little jerky, is all. It's hardly surprising though – the armada is a spectacular sight, with each of these giant spaceships brilliantly designed.

General Andross' Space Armada consists of huge battleships like this one, which launch lots and lots of baddies at you. The red thingies on the side can be shot off, too.

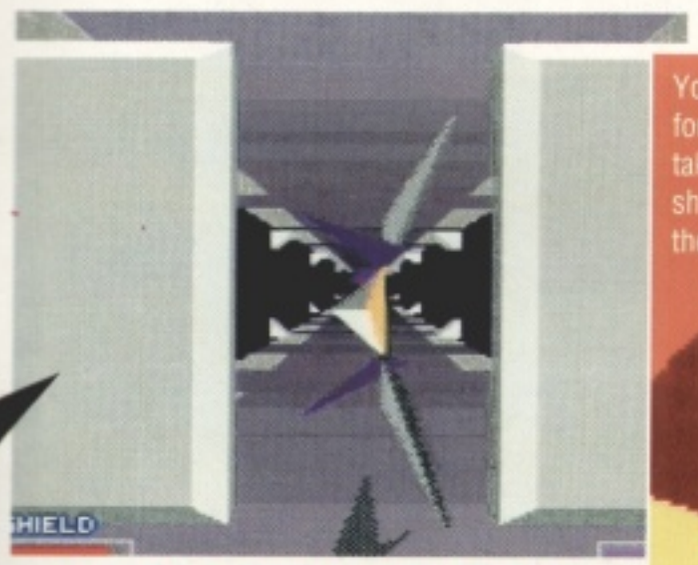
We're nearing the end of stage three, and this is the approach to the fortress. The bold, booming music (which, unfortunately, you can't appreciate through the pages of a mag) helps create a fab atmosphere – somehow *Super Star Wars* just doesn't seem that super any more.

Inside-the-spaceship view gives a different perspective on things.

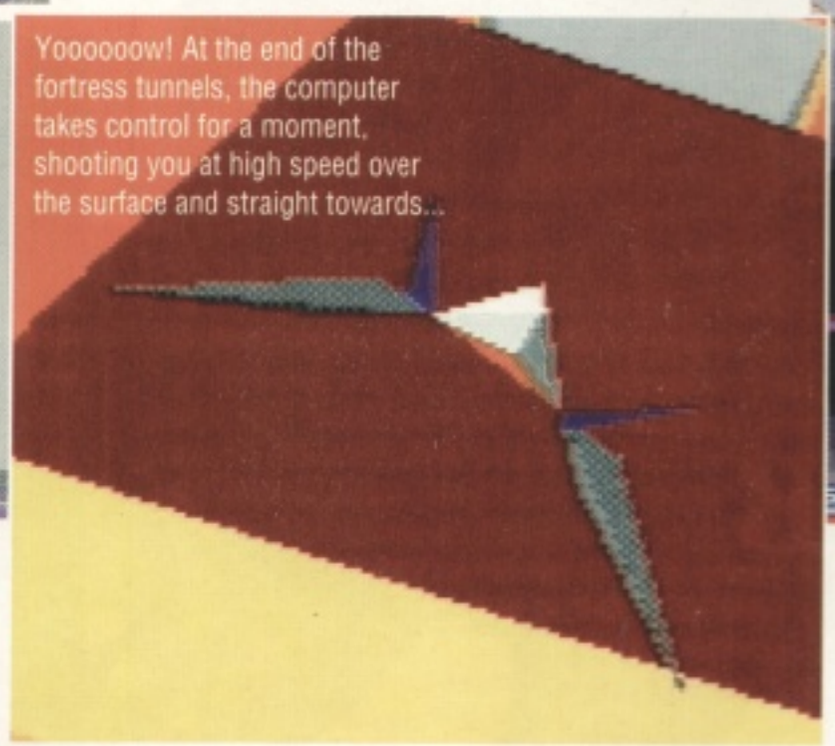
Oh no, Slippy's in danger (again) – that yellow spaceship is hot on his tail. Better take 'im out quickly with a few well-placed blasts, then tick old Slippy off a bit.

This spinning ring here replenishes your shield substantially when you fly through it. There are a fair old few of them scattered through the many levels. Crap pilots will find them invaluable. (By the way, this is the 'USS Paused' we're flying past here.) (*You're fired! – Ed.*)

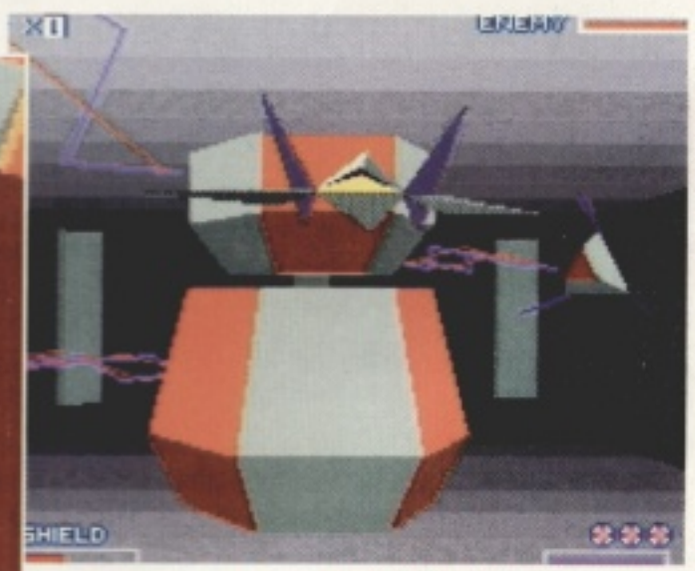
Now, this is what I call a well designed sprite. It's chunky, cuddly (*Eh? – Ed.*), and, well – it just looks completely fab. It's kind of like a, er, big fat thing. (Sorry, this isn't helping much, is it?).



Once you've entered the fortress there are loads of tunnels to negotiate, doors to blast open, and so on. Some doors are a bit narrow, though, so it's best to take them 'on the wing'. (All top pilots speak like that.)



Yooooooow! At the end of the fortress tunnels, the computer takes control for a moment, shooting you at high speed over the surface and straight towards...



...the end-of-level boss! The big bad guy on this stage happens to be a kind of giant spinning room. Knock out the wall thingies to activate the central control unit, then avoid the enemy fire and lob a couple of smart bombs at it to finish it off. Easy!

JONATHAN SAYS...

Although we all loved *Starfox* here at *Super Play*, Matt and Jason were worried that, in their eagerness to be completely fair and objective, their reviews had ended up sounding a little, shall we say, downbeat. So I'll brush aside the fact that *Starfox* isn't the hardest game in the world (swish!), and that once you've played it a few times it might start to get just a teeny bit boring (swoosh!), and instead I'll concentrate on making up for my colleagues' cheerlessness.

And probably the best place to start is with the Super FX chip, which the other two have hopelessly underplayed. All that stuff about *Starfox's* graphics being all right, but nothing special next to the best PC and Amiga games etc etc is nonsense. You won't find anything this good-looking on any other machine. You might find faster frame updates. And you might find more colours. But I defy you to find such a convincing blend of polygons, sprites and Mode 7 backgrounds (without cheating and going into an arcade).

But *Starfox* isn't just a flashy demo of the Super FX chip, either. The programmers have lavished just as much attention on the game's design as they would have with one that didn't have any polygons in it at all. The result is that the baddies all look great, and much more interesting than the boring, blocky things you'll find in most PC games. They move around more convincingly than I can ever remember seeing before, too. This is particularly true of guardians and things – and, although it's a bit difficult to explain, the way they move gives them a tremendous feeling of 'hugeness'. The quality of the animation extends to all the introey bits and linking sequences as well, giving the game an almost balletic quality. I'd call it choreographed (if I didn't hate choreographers).

It's probably fair to say that about nine seventeenths (roughly) of the fun you'll have with *Starfox* will derive from watching all those wonderful graphics whizzing about, and just generally 'being a part of the Super FX experience'. But there's nothing wrong with that. It really is jolly exciting stuff. And then there's the other eight seventeenths – the *Starfox*-simply-being-a-really-good-game side of things – to enjoy too. Brilliant!

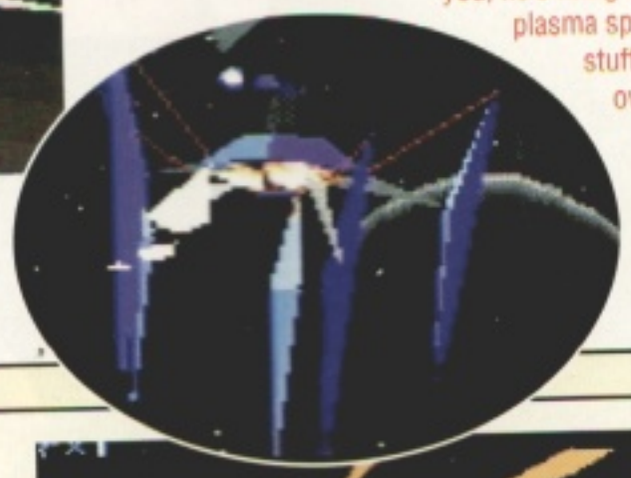
LEVEL ONE, STAGE FOUR: THE METEOR

Here our boys travel to the last staging post on their way to reaching Venom – an enemy station on a giant meteor. The defences are strong here, and only the most skillful pilots are likely to make it through.

These garage-type things have doors that open and close with an annoying fickleness. Take a chance, though, and you could receive something beneficial on the other side, like a power-up.

×2
Ooops! Sorry Peppy – the trigger slipped! Things get noticeably faster on stage four – enemy helicopters fly around at an alarming rate, with many of them flying right for you!
SHIELD
WATCH YOUR AIM, FOX!!

The spider boss on stage four caused a few probs at first. When he's not spinning towards you, he's firing this plasma spray stuff all over.



LEVEL ONE, STAGE FIVE: VENOM'S OUTER DEFENCE

Venom's outer ring of defences must be penetrated before the final approach to the planet's surface can be made. The Phantamx Battle Craft at the end of this section must be followed down onto the planet's surface.

General Pepper appears to brief Fox on the final part of his mission, before our hero heads towards the planet's surface itself!

Things get pretty hectic in the sky above Venom.

Some of the alien defences have cloaking devices, going wire-frame for a time. Best cure is to shoot 'em!

LEVEL ONE, STAGE SIX: VENOM'S FINAL FRONTIER

Level one's final major section takes place on Venom's surface. It's a mind-boggling assault of clever contraptions, designed specifically to stop you firmly in your tracks. Even if you found the rest of the first level easy, you're going to get some problems here.

The lovely descent onto Venom's surface is definitely worth a serious gander or two. The whole screen rotates as you plummet towards the ground and, er, most probably crash. Top pilots, however, should be able to get Fox to pull up just in time, enabling him to take on the next barrage of enemy traps.

MATT SAYS...

It seems almost churlish to start off with a negative comment about a game as significant as this one, so please forgive me – the danger is you'll be carried away with the sheer excitement of it all (which is major-league, make no doubt about that), so I thought someone had better make an attempt to balance things up a bit.

The main problem might seem slightly obvious (this being a shoot-'em-up review and everything) but I'll say it anyway – it's that, despite all the inventive elements and visual brouhaha *Starfox* boasts, you only really get to do the one thing throughout the game (fly into the screen, and shoot things). It's not that there's anything wrong with that, as such, it's just that it makes the game kind of limited – previous big Nintendo games (the *Zeldas*, *Mario Karts* and so on) had rather more gameplay depth.

Other problems are much smaller. Some PC flight sim bores who've seen it complain that this or that bit doesn't move smoothly enough, or that there's no gouraud shading or anything, but it's safe to ignore them – there's never been a PC flight sim that's this exciting. Not being able to turn off the lengthy intro sequence before the game, on the other hand, is more of a problem.

Thankfully, from here on in, though, everything else is fab.

Certainly, I've rarely seen 3D graphics that are so involving before. The speed with which it all moves, the inventive tunnels and spaceships, the great baddies which have character even though they're just made out of polygons (something notoriously hard to do), and – yes – the presence of Fox McCloud and buddies to humanise (well, animalise) everything, all add up into something very special. For a real 'just like being there' space battle feeling, nothing else comes close – it makes the likes of *Wing Commander* or *Warpspeed* look very sick indeed.

A great game then, and a must-have – or, at least, a must-play. And remember – this is only the first product to use the Super FX chip. The next couple (see the interview on page 26) should be *really* spectacular – and maybe a bit longer lasting too.

SIX: NTIER

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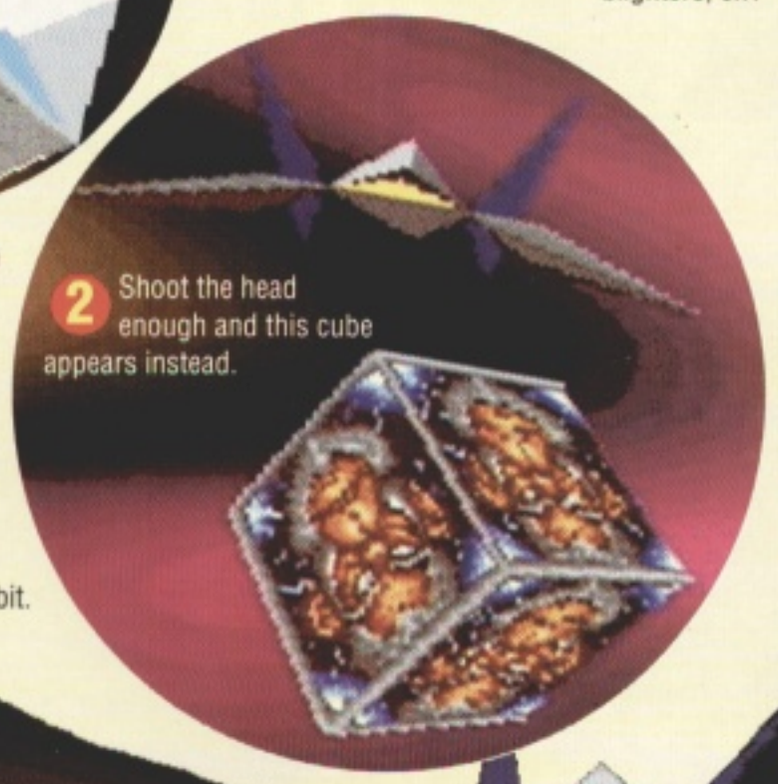
nave – or, r – this is er FX iew on r – and

Wow!' exclaimed everyone, as we all stared at the smooth approach to this fortress-type thing. 'Blimey!' we all shouted, as our ship zoomed off into the sky, turned, and shot down into the fortress' core. 'Bloody heck!' we cursed, as the inevitable happened. (We got blown up.)

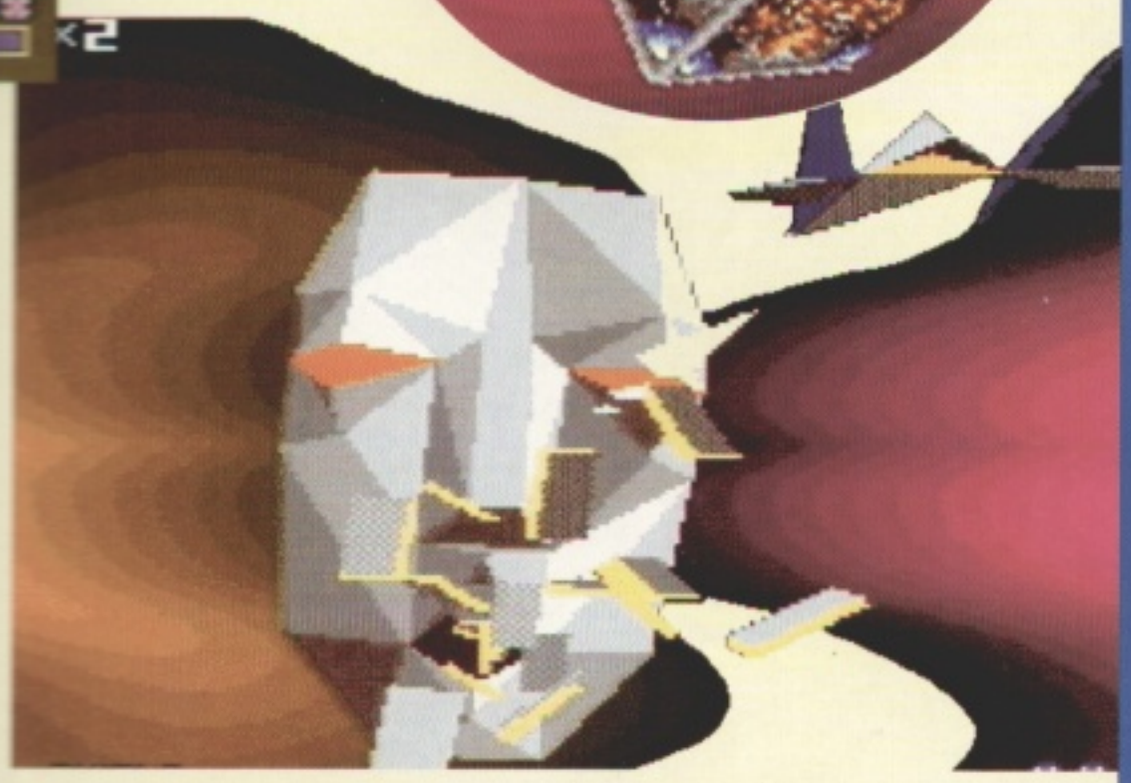
1 Here's the real villain, a glorious, floating robot head.

This cheeky set of polygons tries to spike you by rising up and down in the ground. Later ones even uproot themselves to shoot past you and land in new ground! The little blighters, eh?

The Phantamx Battle Craft that first attacked you above the planet returns, and is truly impressive. People walking past the office stopped to gasp in amazement when we got to this bit.



2 Shoot the head enough and this cube appears instead.



3 Now shoot the cube some more and the head's back again! You're right at the end of the game now (but only on the easiest of its three routes, mind). Watch this guy – he blows shapes at you out of his mouth. Then he tries to suck the whole universe into his cheeks. And then some weird stuff happens. It's great. It's hard to kill. And to think, even after we've polished it off, we've still got to do it on the two harder difficulty levels yet!

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Now I'm not one to be sexist, but after playing video games for years and years I've come to the conclusion that girls *hate* games with polygon graphics. (For more on this, see *Do Girls Hate Video Games?: Essays In Game Psychology* by Professor J Brookes.)

Seriously, I remember going into a computer shop with a girl a few years back, looking to buy the fab polygon-based driving game *Stunt Car Racer* for my Amiga. After a couple of minutes of intensive play-testing (*Gulp! – Ed.*), my girlfriend leaned over and whispered, 'Can you imagine if *your* computer had graphics that bad!' (The Amiga had been beneath the counter all the time, and she hadn't realised that's what it was running on.) There followed a 20 minute lecture on the intricacies of filled 3D polygon graphics, and how much processing power was required to display them at a fast rate. (*You really know how to show a girl a good time, don't you, Jase? – Ed.*) She dumped me a few days later.

A-ha! you're probably thinking at this point. I know what's Jason's going to say next. He's going to say that *Starfox* is the first game to break that mould. That Nintendo's clever addition of a few fluffy animals and some nice music to the mix has suddenly allowed girls to see what they were missing by ignoring 3D games. But you're wrong. Within minutes of me playing *Starfox* in the office, there was Sue, leaning over my shoulder and going on about how she didn't like the graphics much. Ho hum.

So where does that leave us? The fact remains that if you've seen polygon graphics on other systems, you're more likely to be impressed by *Starfox*'s look than if you've been brought up on a strict diet of 2D console games. The whole look and feel of 3D *does* take time to get into (you really have to have graphics of the standard of, say, Namco's new *Galaxian 3* coin-op to impress non-fans).

Still, don't be disheartened – these are still incredible graphics. They're consistently smooth and fast enough to effectively convey the 3D action they set out to convey, and (importantly) are much more imaginative than the 3D stuff you've probably seen anywhere else. The spectacular 3D sprite animations of the bosses are better than anything you'll have seen elsewhere, for instance, and even when the screen gets cluttered, the frame rate stays fast enough to prevent things getting jerky and confusing. The handling of Fox's spaceship is flawlessly smooth and satisfying too, and great sound backs up the action tremendously. The combination of film-like music (*Star Wars* sprang to mind more than once, unsurprisingly enough) and smashing effects (like powerful explosions and hilarious critter talk) causes real sensory overload at times. This is one very slick product.

As far as game design goes, *Starfox* is well structured, but hardly revolutionary. The arcade coin-op *Star Blade* is similar, for instance, though here the action is slightly less linear. You're still limited to flying in one direction, though, and are forced to fight an end-of-level guardian at the end of every section. What is good is the fact that you're given three different, and increasingly difficult, routes to completing the game – it gives *Starfox* a real sense of challenge, surprising for such a mainstream title. For once, it's good to see Nintendo aren't short-changing the more experienced players out there.

So, *Starfox* is a great game then, and a fabulous demonstration of the Super FX chip. It's simply the most exciting and compulsive shoot-'em-up I've played in ages. And it's even got some cuddly, fluffy characters in it that just may be enough to win over the odd open-minded girl to 3D games yet...

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
93%	92%	92%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	93%
87%		

VERDICT: A fast, smooth, stunningly playable and addictive shoot-'em-up that demonstrates the abilities of the new Super FX chip brilliantly. Fabulous graphics and sound, and well-paced playability, all add up to a real winner. Game of the year.

ISSUE 7 MAY 1993

Thanks to Krazy Konsoles, (0422) 342901, for the loan of this cart.

BATMAN RETURNS

Batman Returns with a vengeance! And this time he's brought his pals – Penguin, Catwoman et al. Holy menagerie, Batman!

At first glance this could easily be a still from the movie. Look a bit more closely, though. Notice the way the screen is organised in layers – a background, a floor area in the middle, and a foreground – just as it might be if it was... scrolling. See how one baddy looks uncannily similar to the next. Look at the baddy reeling back as Batman plants a left hook on his chin. And thus it is proven: *Batman Returns* is a scrolling beat-'em-up.

STAGE 1: SHOPPING THE BADDIES

The game kicks off in Gotham City's main shopping street, where everyone's entering into the Christmas spirit. Everyone, that is, except the Penguin's hoodlums, who're kitted out in circus gear.

Some come mounted on motorcycles...

...while others seem to feel happier walking. (But they're more likely to get thrown through windows.)

This baddy's quite a 'tall' order and he throws flaming torches. Fortunately, Batman's brought along a supply of Batarangs.

The end-of-level baddy seems to have taken a fancy to Michelle Pfpffeiffpfppfer (or whatever her name is).

Explaining the film's plot isn't easy, as it didn't really have one to speak of. But we've managed it nonetheless, and it took up so little space that we managed to incorporate it into another of these terrific film-strip type things.

Baddy number one is Catwoman – half cat, half woman and a bit lewd.

Baddy number two is The Penguin – half 'the', half penguin and very ugly.

'Quick! Somebody call Batman!' 'I'll do it, if I can get this thing to work...'

'Just a minute... I'm Batman, aren't I? Better go and get me cozzie on, eh?'

And so the Caped Crusader sets off to clean up Gotham. Hurrah!

Japanese Release

Game: Batman Returns
Publisher: Konami
Developer: In-house
Price: £50-£60
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

STAGE 2: OUTSIDE AGAIN

Level two is largely similar – lots of streets blanketed in snow, and crawling with The Penguin's accomplices. At one point you head indoors, though (so that's a bit different).

Swoosh! You should be getting good at this by now.

This never happens in Marks and Spencer.

There are lots of 'innocent' (hem hem) children to rescue.

The end of the level is guarded by a generously-proportioned strongman with a nasty line in punches.

STAGE 3: LIFTS 'N' GIRDERS

The third stage has platform game overtones, as Batman hops around crumbling window ledges and swings from overhead girders using his trusty Bat-Rope.

This section will give you a real, erm, 'lift'.

You'll need the Bat-Rope for this bit if you're to avoid turning Batman into (erm) Splatman.

Oh no. It's another stilt-walker!

At the end of the level you'll meet Catwoman for the first time. We've explained our feelings on her in the box below.

SOUR PUSS!

We're not entirely convinced by the end of level three, where you run into Catwoman. She takes absolutely *ages* to kill – a ludicrously long time, in fact – and we defy anyone to get the better of her without losing at least six lives in the process. Half the trouble seems to stem from the fact that every time she touches Batman he loses about half his energy. It's a nightmare. (And you've got to fight her at the end of level four as well!)

Catwoman's got a huge number of special moves and things, most of which are very 'un-furr'.

STAGE 4: IT'S ALL GONE DARK

The game goes all dark on the fourth stage, so we hope you can see what's going on. The action stays the same, though – basically just beating people up. Albeit under some nice lighting effects.

Not one of our more exciting screenshots, unfortunately – unless you put yourself in the shoes of the bloke who's just been biffed on the jaw.

This is a *bit* more like it, although we still don't seem to be pushing back any frontiers.

Oh, blimming heck. It's her again.

If, by some miracle, you make it past Catwoman for a second time, you're slap bang up against The Penguin and his umbrella.

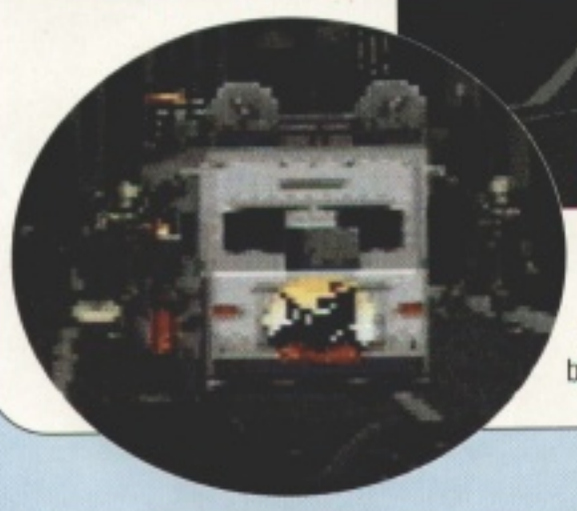
STAGE 5: TO THE BATMOBILE!

Events take a turn for the worse in this driving-game bit which, to be completely frank, isn't much cop. The road scrolls okay, with some nice hilly bits, but the motorbikes you're meant to shoot jerk about horribly, and it's quite a relief to get back to hitting people.

You can shoot the motorbikes. (Hurrah!)

Pick up the Bat-tokens for... erm, we're not quite sure.

The hills are good.



The end-of-level boss is this baddy-covered van-type-thing.

STAGE 6: THE CIRCUS TRAIN

Here's where we have to admit that our gameplaying skills aren't all they ought to be, and that we didn't actually get much further. From what we've seen of it, stage six takes place on a fast-moving train carrying yet more circus performers.

See what we mean?

We don't remember any Red Indians from the film original, but look – here they are. The way they attack you, they certainly don't seem to know they're not wanted – far from it, in fact.

Batman's got a formidable array of moves and things up his sleeve, many of which we've dotted about on the preceding pages. Here are some more, including one involving the Bat-Rope and a great swishing-around one.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Given that the best bits of the *Batman* films are generally the ones where the caped crusader is hitting people, Konami probably made the right decision in crafting *Batman Returns* as a straightforward scrolling beat-'em-up. It's hard to see what else would have worked, although many people are clearly going to be a teeny bit disappointed.

The trouble is that no matter how much effort goes into them, and no matter which top publishers try their luck with them, scrolling beat-'em-ups all tend to end up looking a bit, well... samey. And *Batman Returns* could hardly be described as an exception to the rule. In fact, in many ways it could just be *Final Fight* with the characters jiggled about a bit. With that said, though, make no mistake about it – it's an absolutely top-notch game.

For starters, it's undoubtedly the best scrolling beat-'em-up ever. In no other game will you find such huge, well-animated characters – not even in *Final Fight* – or such an imaginative range of fighting moves. Where else, for example, can you throw baddies through shop windows? Or swoop down on them, cape flapping in the breeze, and punch them soundly on the nose?

And the other terrific thing about it is that Konami have got the spirit of the original film completely sewn up. They've really gone overboard with the intro sequence, with hundreds of digitised stills from the film and Bat-Signals whizzing in and out. And the actual game itself is even more Batmanny thanks to the skill that's gone into drawing the sprites and backgrounds. What's particularly smart is the way Batman himself moves about just as he does in the film, almost as if there's a miniaturised Michael Keaton tucked away inside your Super Nintendo.

In fact, apart from the stuff about Catwoman and the Batmobile explained on the preceding pages, the only actual fault I could find with the game (and even this isn't a proper fault) is that it echoes the movie a bit *too* closely – the problem being that *Batman Returns* was one of the dullest films I've ever seen. I thought the first *Batman* film was great, but the second one just seemed to go completely off the rails. The plot didn't hang together at all, all that Christmassy business smacked of *Home Alone* and the like, and Danny DeVito was just plain irritating. Konami have captured all that perfectly, along with all the good bits described above, and so I kept having horrible flashbacks while I was playing it. Even Danny Elfman's nerve-jangling score has been faithfully reproduced. (I seem to remember it being so loud it drowned out half the film's dialogue, although that mightn't have been such a bad thing.)

But none of that is Konami's fault, of course. They've pulled out all the stops with this one and, within the constraints of the scrolling beat-'em-up formula, have come up with one of the best film games ever.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
90%	89%	89%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	87%
80%		

VERDICT: Konami have consolidated their position at the forefront of Super Nintendo development once again, producing both an excellent film conversion and a brilliant scrolling beat-'em-up.

Thanks to DMC Consoles, (0225) 448253, for the loan of this cart.

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REALMS OF

ROLE PLAYING THE JAPANESE WAY

One thing you've got to understand – the Japanese love Role Playing Games. Love them, love them, love them. Walk into a Japanese sofmap (software shop) and chances are the first thing you'll see is a massive rack of the damn things – next to the best RPGs, even top quality arcade games are small beer sales-wise, and the sort of shelf space they command reflects this. But why? *Super Play* investigates.

Sorry about this, but the Japanese like their RPG characters *cute*.

To the average Westerner, the incredible popularity of RPGs in Japan is all rather puzzling. After all, most of us have been brought up on a strict diet of console action games – from that sort of perspective, these text-heavy, weedy-graphicked RPGs look very unappealing indeed. So unappealing, in fact, that they almost always perform poorly when they're translated into English, with most Japanese themselves agreeing that they lose a lot in translation, without being able to easily put their fingers on exactly why.

Despite all this, however, the more adventurous of us gaijin (foreign) gameplayers have been asking ourselves a question lately – are we missing out on something important here, or what? Let's try to shed a little light on the situation, shall we...?

Now this is more like it. Beautiful and majestic – just like an RPG hero *should* be. It's a shame his name's Darun, though. (Honest!).

WHAT EXACTLY *IS* AN RPG?

RPG's aren't things to be entered into lightly – you need to commit a lot of time to them, which is, alone, enough to put off most Westerners. This isn't, of course, the whole story, however – after all, RPGs in the style of *Dungeon Master* et al are incredibly popular in the West, and are just as involved as your average *Dragon Quest* or what have you. So where does the difference lie?

In order to understand that, we first have to define what we mean by the term 'RPG'. One useful definition is to say that they're games where the player actively puts himself in the shoes of one or more of the game's characters, and then directly influences the way the action proceeds. (This is, of course, the diametrical opposite of something like a shoot-'em-up, where the action is pre-set, and you, as the player, simply have to follow the course the game designer has already dictated for you.)

This is, in as far as it goes, true of all RPGs – so what makes the Japanese model so different? Well, one major point is that they're often much more streamlined and formularised than Western games – indeed, brief descriptions of most of them tend to make them all sound exactly the same (as you'll see in our round-up of the latest Japanese RPGs on the following pages). The standard structure involves a mythical land – almost always a variation on the middle ages, but packed with magic users and mythological creatures – in trouble, with you playing the main character who has to save the place. This is often presented as a thankless (but necessary) task, with most inhabitants you'll come across completely oblivious to their impending fate – they're usually wandering about worried if it's going to rain on their washing or not.

Gameplay, in its basic form, is equally formularised. It generally involves walking around your home village a lot, piecing together all the scraps of information you can find to help you out, before setting off on your quest. Along the way you're bound to face assorted monsters that have to be killed, normally in one of two ways. You either get arcade-style slash-of-a-sword combat (as seen in the action RPG *Zelda*), or – more traditionally – the take-turns-selecting-the-right-text-option combat mode. In this one, the player uses magic or weapons to defeat his enemies, each one defeated boosting the attributes of the player – and thus making him better suited to progress through the game.

We'll look at how these factors combine to make the Japanese RPG a very different beast to its Western counterpart a bit further on.

BUT AREN'T RPGS ALL A BIT, WELL, BORING?

Well – they can be. If ever a game needed time to 'get into', it's an RPG, and this is the main stumbling block that most US and European games players find with them. Put simply, we tend to be too impatient to bother with all the text boxes and selection screens that dominate most of the genre.

Further analysis reveals a cultural difference that separates us from the Japanese in terms of the types of games we enjoy playing. The Japanese are traditionally a very story-motivated people, and tend to have a more introspective nature than most Westerners. The Japanese tend to read far more than most of their Western counterparts and, as most of you will be aware, comics (or manga) play a significant part in all levels of Japanese society. Stories – and particularly stories involving far off lands and mysterious creatures – crop up everywhere in Japanese life. It's a background in which RPG-playing can thrive. The reluctance of most young Westerners to read outside of school or work time is a characteristic that just doesn't meld with most heavy-going RPGs. And this doesn't look likely to change in the near future either.

FANTASY

by Jason Brookes

SO HOW DIFFERENT *ARE* JAPANESE RPGS?

To the Western RPG fan, first-person perspective games like *Dungeon Master*, *Eye Of The Beholder* and *Ultima Underworlds* – where the player views the game as if he or she were actually inside the body of the character they are controlling – have become far more popular than those games featuring the second person viewpoint which the Japanese thrive on. So why should this be the case? Well, one reason is that the Japanese enjoy thinking of their little characters as real people that they are directing the actions of more than we do – we, on the other hand, tend to like the idea of actually being inside the game itself. This doesn't mean that games like *Dungeon Master* haven't found their followers in Japan too (the Super Famicom version has sold well since its release over a year ago), but it's not what they usually go for.

The other big difference is that, despite the impression of freedom of movement that Japanese RPGs have, they're actually far more structured than their Western counterparts. A Western RPG will normally allow the player to explore vast areas of the landscape, quite easily getting lost in the process, but this'll never happen in a Japanese game. They are far more linear, which fits in with the strong element of story-telling in most of them. In fact, many Japanese see RPGs as 'interactive manga' – books or comics in which you don't so much determine the story as actually help it along its pre-ordained route – which perhaps explains the insatiable Japanese appetite for the latest slice of popular RPG series like *Final Fantasy* or *Dragon Quest*. Buying the game is like buying the next instalment of a serialised story – a different state of affairs from Western *Dungeons And Dragons*-style RPGs, where the player shapes the story himself.

Left: *Ultima Underworlds* on the PC – a first person perspective. Below: *Zelda 3* – a typical action RPG with a second person perspective.

Above: Discussing the possibilities behind *Final Fantasy VI* – yes, another sequel is already in the pipeline. Right: Asmik's *Lennus* contains a useful diary of events.

SO WHAT *EXACTLY* MAKES A GOOD RPG?

No-one is more concerned about this than the Japanese, and to illustrate the point their games magazines regularly (ie almost every week) feature discussions between games designers and industry figures about the future this genre faces. What the punters most like to hear is speculation over what new elements will be included in the next big RPGs. *Final Fantasy V*, one of the biggest successes recently, was talked about so much that its prequel of two years ago started selling in big numbers again, re-entering the Japanese charts both before and after *Final Fantasy V*'s release last December. To illustrate just how completely hooked the Japanese are on RPGs here are five most common themes that these magazine discussions focus on:

1) AUTOMATED FIGHT SEQUENCES

Recent articles in Japanese games magazines talking about the future of RPGs have revealed that the automated fight sequences, as developed for *Dragon Quest V*, have proved extremely popular, and now look set to become a standard for other games in the same series. Artificial intelligence drives all the characters on your side, apart from the main warrior character who is under your direct control.

Above: *Dragon Quest V*: Automatic fights! Right: Listen guys, this adventure had better be a good one. Here's the plan...

All the player has to do is choose the relevant tactic he wants to use and then just sit back and watch.

2) CONSTANT UPDATES

Another feature in RPGs that many players seem to like is a diary, or digest of information, that lets the player know if they've missed or forgotten anything along the way. This is especially useful to players who don't play regularly enough to keep abreast of the full pattern of events. A diary or log catalogues all of the important events that have taken place so far, making sure you don't get confused as to what you should be doing next.

3) GETTING THE RESPECT YOU'RE DUE!

A common view held by many RPG fans in Japan is that too much time is wasted in many games hunting for the information necessary for progress to be made. Consequently, the Japanese argue that if you supposed to be the saviour of the land, the population should treat you accordingly – ie coming to give you whatever information you require, instead of you having to search for it! 'Give me the respect I'm due,' seems to be the basic feeling.

4) VARIABLE DIFFICULTY SETTINGS

It's widely felt that it's impossible to pitch the difficulty of an RPG at the right level without testing people's patience. Some people like the tactical challenge of a fight, while others want to

simply sit back and enjoy the scenery while getting a good grasp of the storyline. For this reason, variable difficulty settings are felt to be a good idea. (To illustrate this wish to make games either easier or harder than the designers set them at, some die-hard Japanese *Dragon Quest* fans have gone out of their way to get the US *Dragon Warrior* versions of the game series, because the English text both makes the games even more difficult, and improves their knowledge of the language at the same time! That said, the Japanese usually agree that intricate RPG storylines are often spoilt by clumsy translation, something that might contribute slightly to their relative unpopularity in the States.)

In the US the *Dragon Quest* series is called *Dragon Warrior* on the NES. The fourth game is due soon.

5) VIRTUAL REALITY

This is a buzz-word on the tongues of all Japanese games freaks at the moment, RPG fans in particular. Apparently, some Japanese games designers are so keen on creating a 'true role playing experience' that they're now suggesting that gadgets could be developed to attach to the human body to help to simulate true combat. Think about it – instead of your character's damage meter dropping a few notches when that enemy wizard casts his spell on you, a couple of hundred volts could be sent up your left leg, effectively telling you the same thing! Suddenly, the whole process of completing an RPG for a Super Player's Guide guide looks about 100 times less appealing than previously. (Even Jonathan would probably have to think twice...)

Above: A couple of hundred volts up each arm might just convince you that your combat techniques are severely lacking. Left: *Legend Quest* – one of the first virtual reality RPGs.

THE DRAGON QUEST PHENOMENON

How Enix's RPG series became the toast of Tokyo

We've already talked about *Dragon Quest* in some detail here in *Super Play* (in a feature entitled *Dragon Quest V*: Inside Japan's Favourite Game in issue 3), but a few points we made there really need reiterating here.

Chief amongst these, of course, is that the *DQ* series is just about the biggest thing ever seen in computer or video games, at least as far as the Japanese are concerned. It was *Dragon Quest V* that created queues of Tokyo gameplayers lining the streets to buy the new game long enough to swamp anything *Street Fighter II* could manage, after all. (This was, you will remember, the game that provoked ugly incidents where kids who hadn't managed to buy the game mugged those that had on their way home. It was also the game that caused outrage amongst the Tokyo street cleaning fraternity, who claimed that punters queuing for a copy had left an unreasonable amount of litter in the streets. The Japanese government has recently decreed that *Dragon Quest* games should only be launched on Sundays or national holidays, to try and cut down on the extra work and school absenteeism they cause.)

However, almost as important as the immense popularity of the *Dragon Quest* series inside Japan is its singular lack of appeal outside that country. American versions (with all the text translated into English, and redubbed *Dragon Warrior*) are notorious underachievers. Much of the appeal of *Dragon Quest* comes from the character designs – the work of *Dragon Ball* artist Akira Toriyama, a major star in Japan, but unheard of outside of it. In fact, it is this star status bestowed upon many Japanese character designers that seems to define the appeal of all Japanese RPGs, and the *Dragon Quest* games in particular, inside Japan – and their failure outside of it. Japanese gameplayers like vast casts of characters, all with their own histories and personalities, to get lost in – it fits their often fairly introverted lifestyles. For the same reasons they like the vast, difficult-to-finish, games these characters inhabit. Western gameplayers prefer their thrills immediate and relatively uninvolved. It's just a difference of attitude.

Above and right: *Dragon Quest V* for the Super Famicom. Below: An advert that's causing a lot of fuss for *Dragon Quest* fans at the moment – the original *DQ 1* and *2* are set to appear on the Super Famicom together on one cartridge.

The main queue for *Dragon Quest V* outside BIC Camera in the Ikebukuro district of Tokyo on the 27 September last year. Over 12,000 people bought 30,000 copies of the game.

DRAGON QUEST I AND II: COMING TO THE SUPER FAMICOM

The NES originals make the jump to the new machine

The biggest recent *Dragon Quest*-related news has been Enix's plan to release the original two *Dragon Quest* games – *Dragon Quest I* and *DQII* – on the Super Famicom. (The first four *Dragon Quest* games on NES have sold around 10 million copies between them, each one earning a place in the top 10 highest sellers of all time.) Graphics for both games – which will appear on the one cart – have been upgraded, with the new command system introduced with *DQV* added to make them easier to play. Scenarios and events have been mucked about with too – both to improve things, and to keep those who played the NES versions of the games on their toes. Unsurprisingly, the *Dragon Quest*-mad Japanese have gone completely mad at the idea of this – there's no release date yet, but Japanese street cleaners are already preparing themselves for trouble!

AND NOW... LOTS OF NEW RPGS!

There have never been quite so many new RPGs in the Japanese games market as there are at the moment, and telling them apart can be pretty tricky, so we thought we'd show you a few of them and tell you a little (well, all we could find out) about each one. You never know – as RPGs get even more popular in the West, some of these games might even get translated into English one day...

DUAL ORB (I'MAX)

A more involved affair than many of the other RPG's, with standard genre characters like Ralf (a warrior), Theo (a cleric), Liz (a swordsman) and a token fairy, Lumious. The viewpoint changes all the time in this one, with the combat scenes rendered in extreme close-up, while the wandering about is tackled more sedately. Out in the middle of April on 12 Mbit cart.

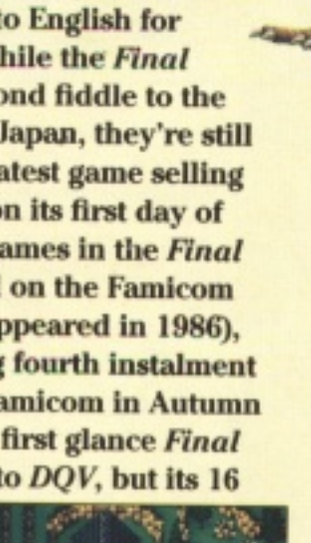
ELFARIA (HUDSON SOFT)

Elfaria is a 12 Mbit title and has already been around for quite a few months in Japan, but is still selling very steadily and has won loads of fans – mainly because it utilises the Nintendo mouse to full effect. Other characters join your party and wander around behind you as you complete each stage. The graphics are particularly good in this one, and the game comes with some fab promotional artwork by the reknowned Japanese gaming artist Susumu Matsushita.

ESTOPOLIS (TAITO)

This is apparently Taito's own answer to *Dragon Quest V* and *Final Fantasy V*, and initial reports suggest it's another top quality RPG, though it's very similar-looking to its main rivals. The game's main claim to fame is that it's so big it's actually split into three different stories (a story structure similar to that of *Star Wars*), which are linked together as each section is completed.

Estopolis is 8 Mbit in size, and expected to be released in June.



DORABOTCHAN (NAXAT)

This is an action RPG like *Zelda*, created by Red Company – the team behind such class stuff as Hudson Soft's *PC Kid* games on the PC Engine, and the recently released *Elfaria* on the Super Famicom (cf). In case you were wondering, 'Dora' is taken from the Japanese word Doracula (or Dracula), while 'Botchan' means young man or master – it's similar to the old PC Engine platform game *Son Of Dracula*, except for the RPG perspective. The usual magic and items are there in abundance to be collected, and the game is available now on 8 Mbit cart.

FINAL FANTASY V (SQUARE SOFT)

This is currently the only dead cert for translation into English for the US market. While the *Final Fantasy* games play second fiddle to the *Dragon Quest* series in Japan, they're still very popular, with this latest game selling nearly a million copies on its first day of release. The first three games in the *Final Fantasy* series appeared on the Famicom (NES) in 1987 (*DQ* first appeared in 1986), while the massive-selling fourth instalment came out on the Super Famicom in Autumn 1991 to rave reviews. At first glance *Final Fantasy V* looks similar to *DQV*, but its 16 Mbit cart has better graphics and sound – which have won over lots of real *DQ* fans. It'll appear in the US later this year.

ALBERT ODYSSEY (SUNSOFT)

A fabulous looking 10 Mbit RPG that incorporates a neat three dimensional effect in the scrolling landscape, with loads of colours used to create interesting lighting effects. The plot is standard fare, concerning the recovery of a magic sword that's hidden in one of the eight mysterious lands you have to explore. You know the kind of thing – talk to people, search buildings and, yes, kill lots and lots of baddies. *Albert Odyssey* has been available in Japan since March, and has been very well received.

OGRE BATTLE
(QUEST)

One of a popular series of RPG/strategy games on the Super Famicom and almost a cross between a board game and a standard RPG. The most outstanding thing about *Ogre Battle* is the attention that's been put into the graphics – it's one of the first strategy games to make full use of the graphical abilities of the machine. Choosing from a variety of strange beasts such as dragons, ogres and dwarves, you fight battles to conquer the land and eventually the world. This is available now but, because it's so complicated, don't expect to see much of it in the UK.

NEUGIER
(WOLF TEAM)

This is shaping up to be another nice-looking action RPG. The gameplay is similar to that of *Soul Blazer*, but with more features – including a gadget like the hook-shot in *Zelda* that can be used to get across certain sections. You'll have to jump in the right places to reveal secret rooms or reach new levels too. This is now available on 8 Mbit cart, and should be worth a look if any copies make it into the UK.

SWORD WORLD SFC
(T & E SOFT)

This is a Japanese PC game, originally entitled *Sword World PC*, that features even more text than most RPGs (*Let me at it! – Jonathan*). The usual characters crop up throughout the game – clerics, bards, priests, sorcerers and so on, but it's possible to actually create your own character. The neat thing here is that the story is influenced by the people you have in your group, and the types of information you manage to extract from the town folk. This 12 Mbit RPG isn't expected until August this year, so Jonathan and his pals will have to be patient.

HOLY SWORD LEGEND 2
(SQUARE SOFT)

This 16 Mbit game is the second most eagerly anticipated RPG in Japan at the moment, after (of course) the newly announced *Dragon Quest I•II*. It previously appeared on the Game Boy over there, and features a character who travels around the land in the form of a human cannonball (courtesy of Mode 7). Without a doubt it's Square Soft's best-looking RPG to date – even better than their well received *Final Fantasy V. Holy Sword Legend 2* will be released in Japan in late April, so let's just hope it gets translated into English, too.

LEGEND OF HEROES II: DRAGON SLAYER
(EPOCH)

This one's a sequel to the original *Dragon Slayer* game that appeared on the Famicom (NES) and PC Engine Super CD – there's an action-packed anime film telling the same story too, all of which combine to give the game a high profile in Japan. What we have here is an RPG with an overhead perspective similar to the *Ys* games – you should recognise the look (lots of tiny sprites and fairly simplistic graphics) from many traditional RPGs. Expect a huge map and hundreds of different creatures to do battle with. Whether Epoch's translation will be as polished as Hudson Soft's previous versions remains to be seen. This one's scheduled for a June release on a 12 Mbit cart.

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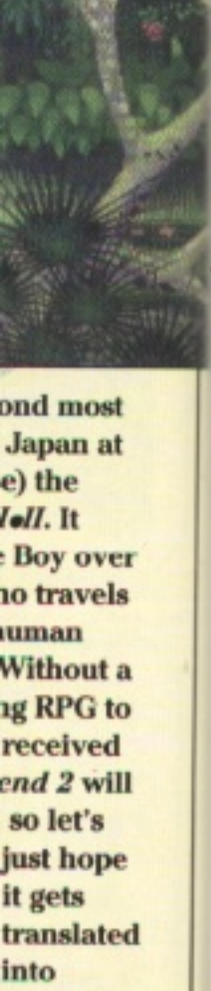

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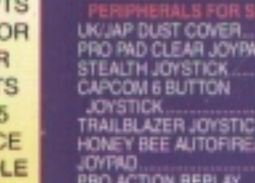

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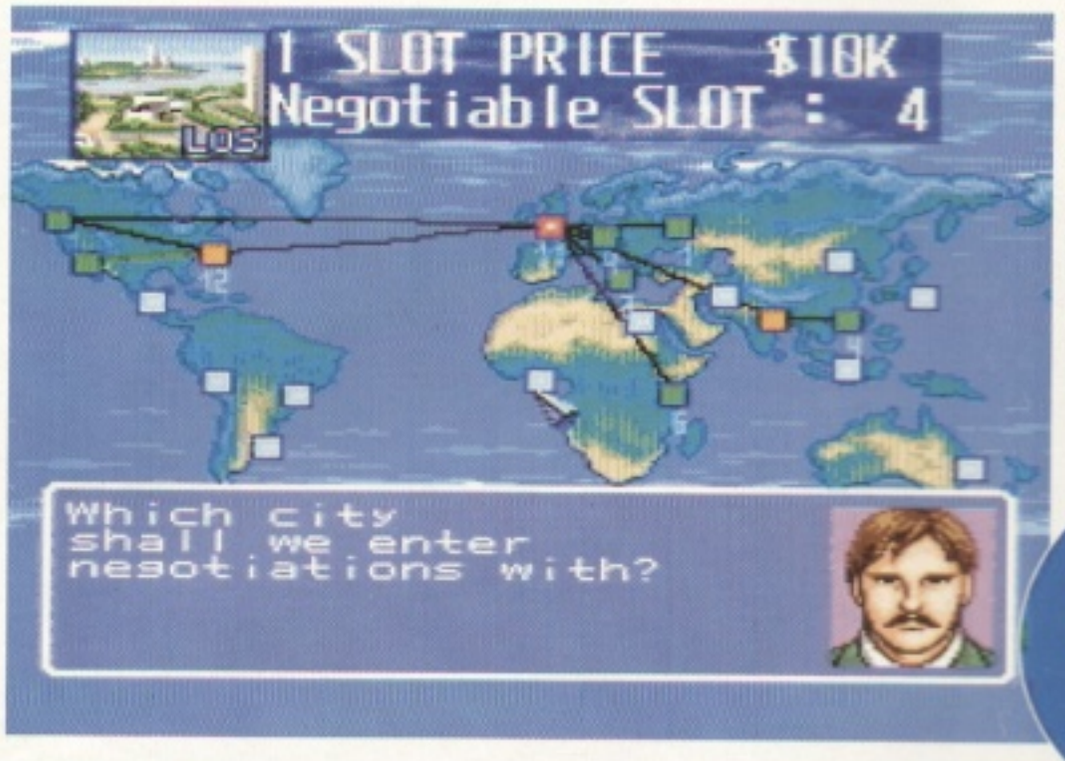
AEROBIZ

Until recently, we'd have sworn that we'd never play an airport management sim on the Super Nintendo. And then, when we got one, we started swearing when we almost couldn't find anyone gullible enough to review it. Enter Rich Pelley...

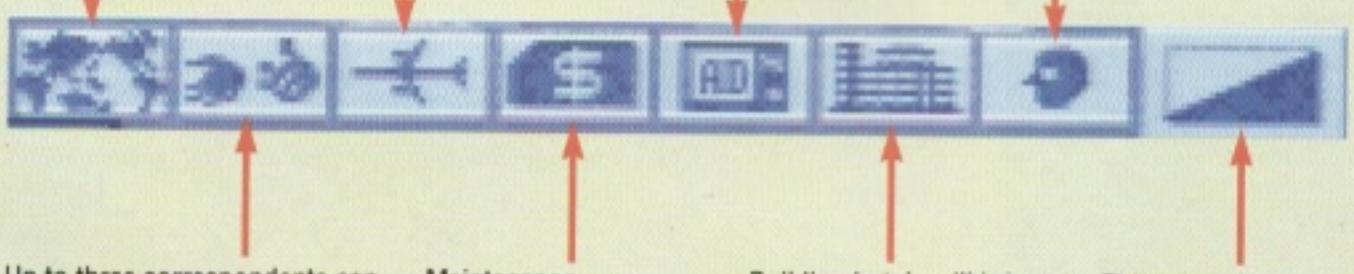


Your ultimate goal in *Aerobiz* is to create a global airline network, beating your three competitors. You start the game with just one office, but a huge sum of money to work with. From then on you enter the cut-throat world of wheeling and dealing...

To set up a route, negotiate with the destination country for use of their runway. Then designate the number of planes and flights you'll have per week, and the fares for flying.

So how are we doing? One problem with *Aerobiz* is that it's a bit hard to tell exactly how you're doing. This screen pops up every so often, but it's not really much help.

ALL ABOUT ICONS


Use this icon to set up routes.
Don't forget to buy some planes. (Manufacturers introduce new planes as the game progresses.)
Extra promotion will keep your name in the spotlight.
Consult your people for advice on how you're doing, and what to do next.
Up to three correspondents can be sent to different countries to negotiate for slots (it'll take six months, though).
Maintenance, advertising and service are all important. Set budgets for them here.
Building hotels will bring in money, and offices in other countries will help you expand your network.
This icon advances you on three months.

US Release

Game: Aerobiz
Publisher: Koei
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £45
Release: Out now
Players: 1 to 4 simultaneously
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

The sensation which tingled through my body when I was handed *Aerobiz* – a strategic airline simulation – to review was one which I could liken to suddenly discovering that, not only is there a tarantula climbing up your leg, but your house is on fire. I was daunted, knowing that it would take me ages to suss out how to play it. I was petrified, feeling that strategy games just aren't suited to the Super NES. And I was terror-stricken at the thought that it would be too boring to warrant a decent mark.

But I needn't have been so despondent about the control method. It's totally icon-based and a joy to use. In fact, I'll give you a money-back guarantee that you could work it all out for yourself (without any help from the instructions).

I shouldn't have been so sceptical about whether the game exploits the hardware or not, either. *Aerobiz* looks good, with little pictures appearing when something happens – a little plane takes off and lands in Mode 7 every time you open a new route, that sort of thing. In fact the game has Super Nintendo written all over it (three times on the box, and twice on the cartridge, if you count).

But there *is* a problem: there just isn't enough to do. The trouble I had was that I spent my first few goes opening as many routes as possible. As a result I took more money and more passengers than my competitors, and yet I made considerably less profit. It transpires that it's better to limit your routes – concentrate on flights in and out of just one country, say. So if you play the game properly, you'll spend most of your time nurturing your existing routes rather than making any major changes to your enterprise. Sure, this is how real businesses are run, but it's all a bit boring really, isn't it?

● Rich Pelley

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
75%	46%	65%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
73%		69%

VERDICT: A well presented attempt at a little strategy on the SNES, but it's too serious and down-to-earth. There's just not enough to do.

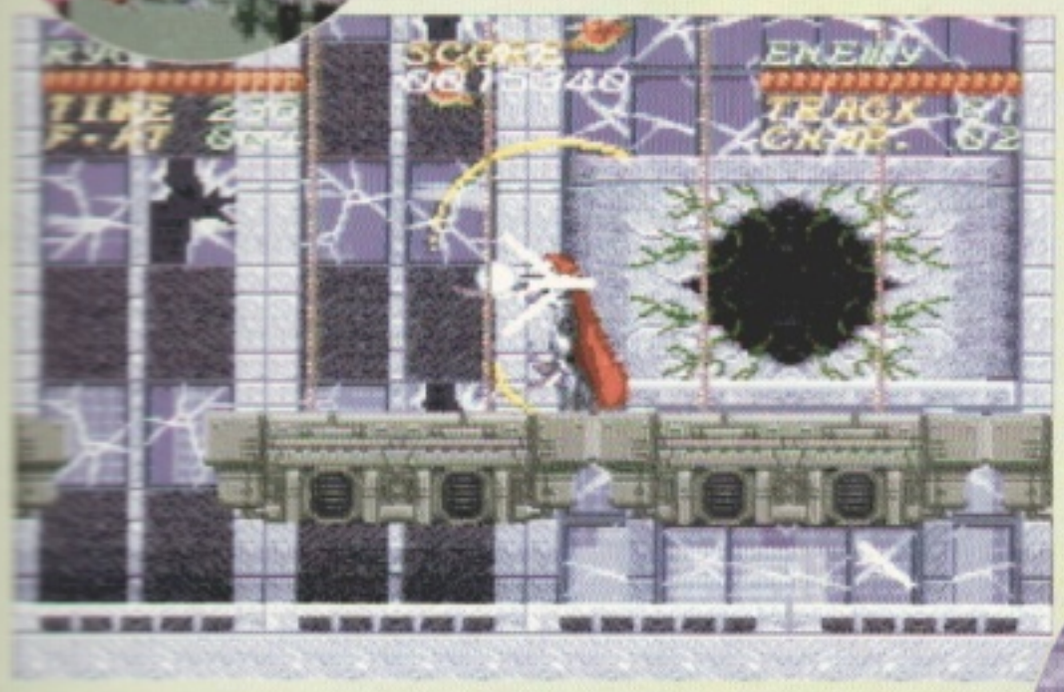
Thanks to Shekhana Consoles, (081) 340 8565, for the loan of this cart.

PSYCHO DREAM

Japanese Release

Game: Psycho Dream
Publisher: Riot
Developer: Telenet Japan
Price: Approx. £45
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Hmm... this *sounds* like the sort of thing Japanese game designers have every night. So is it a dream of a game, or simply another nightmare? Let's see...



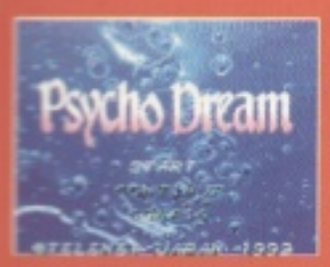
Having rode an elevator down the side of a building, and battled mysterious flying creatures, Ryo discovers this eerie opening. And, being incredibly dim-witted, he goes inside. Me? I'd be off like a dirty shirt...

If you can't be bothered killing all the nasties by hand, you can unleash your frightening smart bomb. The screen shudders, does an impression of a Spectrum, and kills 'em all.

Many of the creatures inhabiting this particular Super NES kill-fest release weapon power-ups and shields. (Either that, or Ryo has overdosed on Ready Brek.)

Don't be fooled by this pretty squid-boss. Like much of the rest of *Psycho Dream*, it's simple, transparent and easy to finish off.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?



The one thing that appeals to me as a reviewer about import games is the enforced omission of plot: I can no sooner read Japanese than I can hover across the room without crumpling the Axminster. As far as I'm concerned, the game's called *Psycho Dream* and it stars a blokey, Ryo; or a girlie, Maria (depending on your personal preference). The rest of the story doesn't count.

However, even avoiding a quick peek at the pictures in the instruction manual, it soon becomes apparent that the person responsible for *Psycho Dream* must be a very light sleeper. You could say the gameplay is shallow, but 'not there at all' would be much more apt.

What happens is that you walk from left to right (and occasionally from right to left)* and you kill everything that comes within reach of your flashing blade (or glowing whip – see Ryo/Maria above). And that, as they say, is it: stroll, stroll, kill, slaughter, meet boss, die.

I guess there's a market for this sort of game, but I don't think Europe is it. Unless you're easily wowed by a few transparent guardians, or excited by parallax scrolling, you're not going to break into a sweat, let alone a smile, over this one. And just in case you have any niggling doubts that refuse to die on the edge of my rapier-like comments, slap it on easy mode and you'll see the entire game in one sitting. As long as you aren't overcome by boredom first.

So there you have it: limited gameplay; infinite continues; long, bland levels; and a soundtrack which is just like any other soundtrack, on any other Japanese beat-'em-up, anywhere.

Producing games like this for the SNES is like owning a Turbo Esprit and driving everywhere at 20 miles an hour. What a waste of time and plastic.

● Matt Bielby

* Sorry, I lied. You can walk diagonally up and down stairs too.

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
67%	62%	35%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	33%
28%		

VERDICT: How do games of such startling banality ever get off the drawing board? And who the hell buys 'em? Not you, hopefully.

Thanks to DMC Consoles, (0225) 448253, for lending us this cart.

THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER

If you were expecting a strategic submarine simulation based on the film, then you're going to be disappointed. If, on the other hand, you were expecting a submarine-based shoot-'em-up based on the film, then you'll be *really* disappointed.

US Release

Game: The Hunt for Red October
Publisher: Hi Tech Expressions
Developer: In-house
Price: £40-45
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

MISSION ONE
Mission objective from HQ: Escape from the USSR and defect to the US. Evade or destroy all hostile forces.
What this actually entails: Scrolling from left to right shooting a few enemies every so often.

MISSION TWO
Mission objective from HQ: Illegal arms merchants are operating from an island base. Destroy their base along with all support ships and planes.
What this actually entails: Scrolling from left to right shooting enemies. And shooting a big base at the end.

MISSION THREE
Mission objective from HQ: Escort a passenger ship carrying VIPs safely to its destination. You're cleared to fire on all aggressors.
What this actually entails: Scrolling from left to right shooting a few enemies.

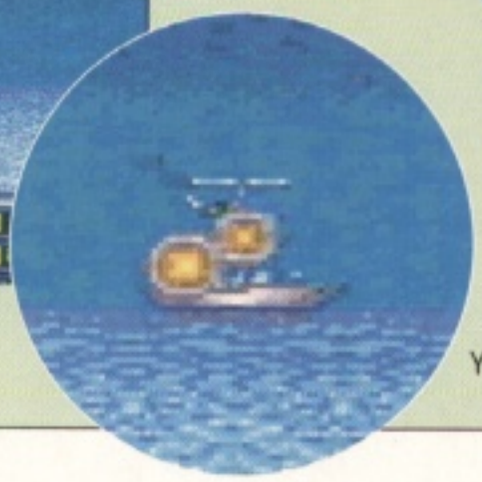
MISSION FOUR
Mission objective from HQ: You're probably getting the gist of it by now.
What this actually entails: Likewise.

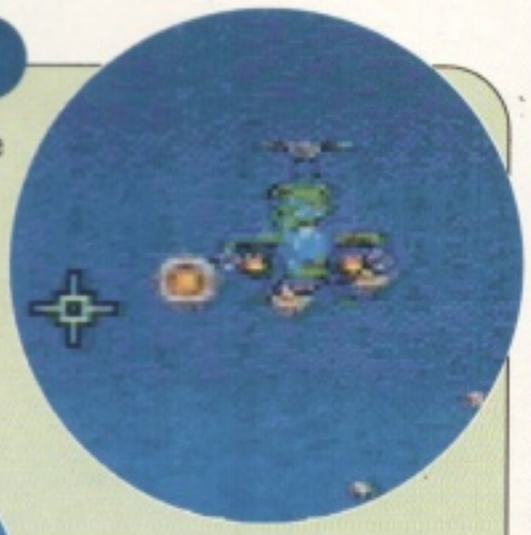
UP PERI-'SCOPE'

Once or twice a level you enter this shooting bit, which has been designed to be played with the Super Scope.

Unfortunately, *Red October*'s the worst Super Scope game yet.

The enemies move terribly slowly, and the collision detection is a disgrace.





If you were wise enough *not* to invest in a Super Scope, you'll have to stick with your joypad, and the cursor moves far too slowly. You're stuffed both ways, basically.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

The Red October is the most sophisticated submarine yet built by the Soviet Union (we're back in the days of the Cold War here, by the way), and Captain Marko Ramius has just stolen it. Time for some highly involved cat-and-mouse under-water stalking, you'd think, or some sort of adventure game, but no – *Hunt For Red October* is a simple shoot-'em-up, starring you as said captain, piloting said sub.

But it's not a fast, frenetic shoot-'em-up in the *R-Type* tradition. Rather it's a leisurely, methodical one. Each baddy has to be picked off individually with the weapon most appropriate to its relative position. The baddies are the kind of sea-bound vehicles you'd expect – other subs, ships and planes – all of whom move only in straight lines. The weapons available are torpedoes (which fire horizontally), SAMs (which fire vertically), SSMs (which fire diagonally) and bombs. All you do is move left and right, and shoot everything.

Aside from enemies, there are two other things which you should look out for. The first are small yellow repair and re-arm drones. The second are little periscope icons. Steer into one of these and the Red October will surface, presenting you with an into-the-screen shooty bit in which you can use your Super Scope. This part lasts for about 40 seconds, after which your sub is repaired and you're returned to the game proper. Finish a level and you'll progress onto the next. It'll be much like the last (steering around, and shooting things) but with different scenery. There are nine levels and, after only half a day's playing, I can already get onto level six.

So why the tedious, unimaginative, badly written review? Well, it just seemed appropriate, somehow. (*Hmm... – Ed.*) And I couldn't think of any jokes to put in it.

● Rich Pelley

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
23%	14%	21%
GAMELIFE 13%	OVERALL SCORE:	25%

VERDICT: Apart from the Super Scope bit, there's nothing about this game that says 'Super Nintendo' any louder than its says 'Vic 20'.

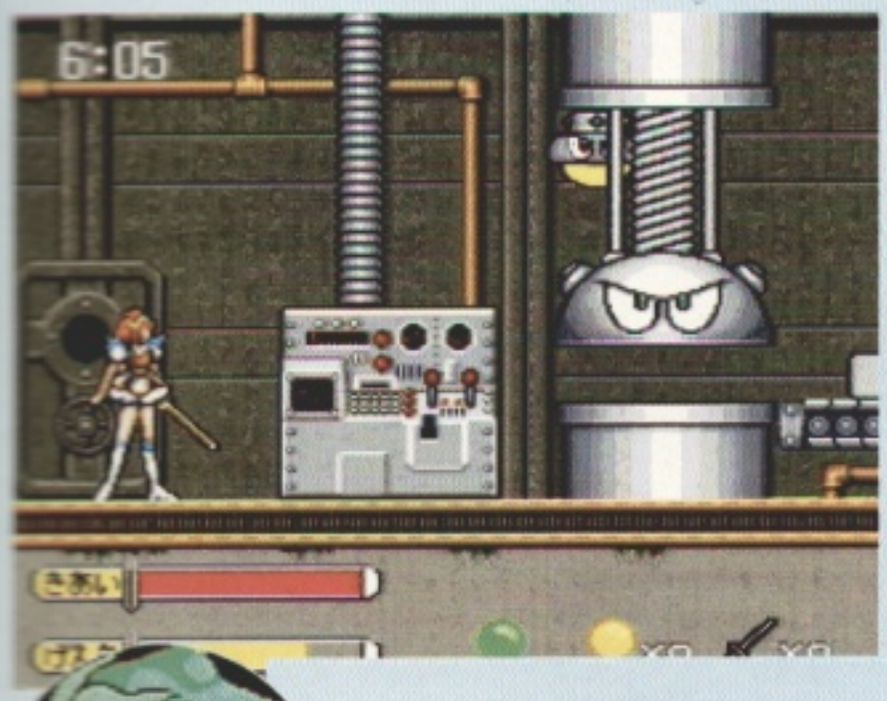
Thanks to Shekhana Consoles, (081) 340 8565, for the loan of this cart.

EVIL SWORD

***'Don't Lose!' Evil Kendo* – that's the rather imaginative title our Japanese translator came up with last month when we previewed this.**

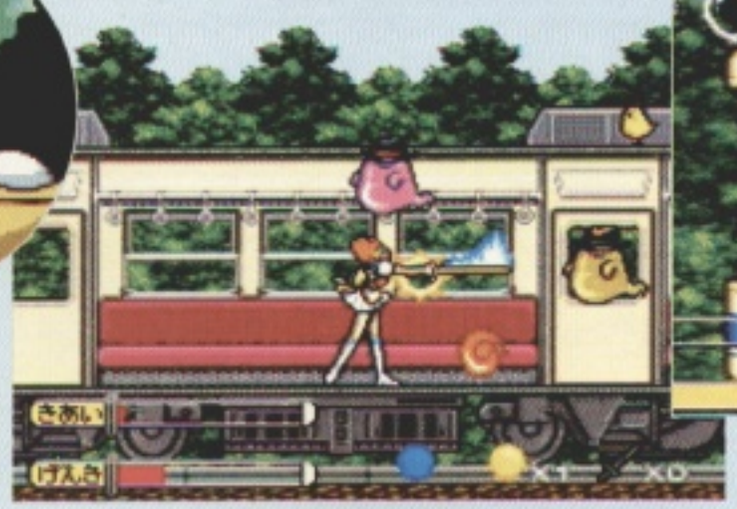
Japanese Release

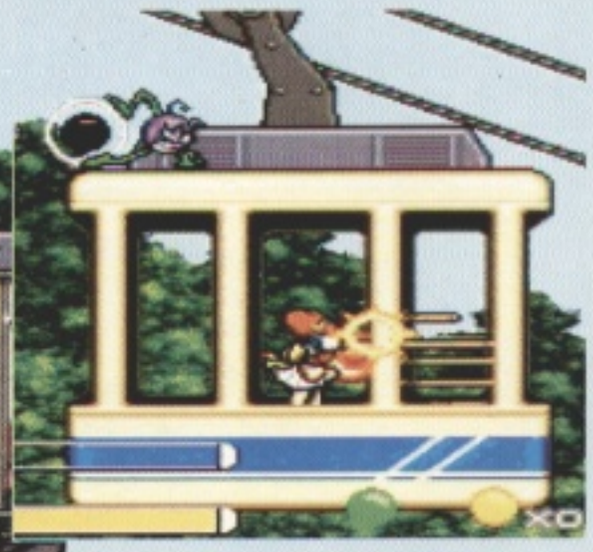
Game: Evil Sword
Publisher: Datam Polystar
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £45
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit



We're still not absolutely sure what the game's called, but we reckon *Evil Sword* might be a little closer to the mark. The plot remains something of a mystery, too, but we do know it involves a girl called Tsu-Rugi no Mai.

The object of the game is to clear all the levels of monsters. With your 'evil' sword.





The scene switches to a cable car, but the action remains the same: Swish! Chop!

You have to be fit to hunt monsters, so Tsu-Rugi goes jogging in her local forest a lot.

One day she's approached by what looks like a cabbage patch kid who's grown up (and bought a trench coat). They get along splendidly until...

...his cigar unfortunately catches in her hair and, in the ensuing conflagration, her tracksuit is all but destroyed. (*Look, are you absolutely sure about this? – Ed.*) (No, not at all.)

By way of compensation, the stranger presents her with a small plastic elephant.

But it smells faintly of roast potatoes. Tsu-Rugi decides she's had enough of all this, and heads off to find some monsters to kill.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Name confusion aside, there's no doubt that *Evil Sword* (as we'll call it for the time being) is a game that features a girl running about with a sword. That we are sure of. It's also very, very bizarre, and not really very good.

Given that the game centres around a long-legged sword-wielding girl, you'd think the programmers would have put a little effort into making her look nice. And during the intro sequence she looks very nice indeed. During the actual game, though, while some of the baddies are very well animated indeed, Tsu-Rugi isn't. She got about six frames of animation at the very most (or maybe a couple more), which looks terrible. And they haven't even bothered to come up with a real 'swimming' animation, so the underwater sections are just ridiculous. *Evil Sword* isn't going to take you long to finish, either. There are only seven stages (again – as far as we can work out) and they're pretty short.

The game shouldn't be written off entirely, though, having a certain Japanese pizzazz which we couldn't help but admire. Look at those pictures from the intro sequence, for example. Aren't they great? And, although as a rule the sprites and backgrounds aren't exactly great, there are occasional moments of inspiration which lift the game up from the doldrums.

But we've reached the concluding paragraph, and the conclusion has to be that *Evil Sword* just isn't worth going out of your way to find. It seems unlikely that many copies will make it into this country anyway – quite how it found its way into our consignment from Japan we're not sure.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
60%	72%	65%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	55%
48%		

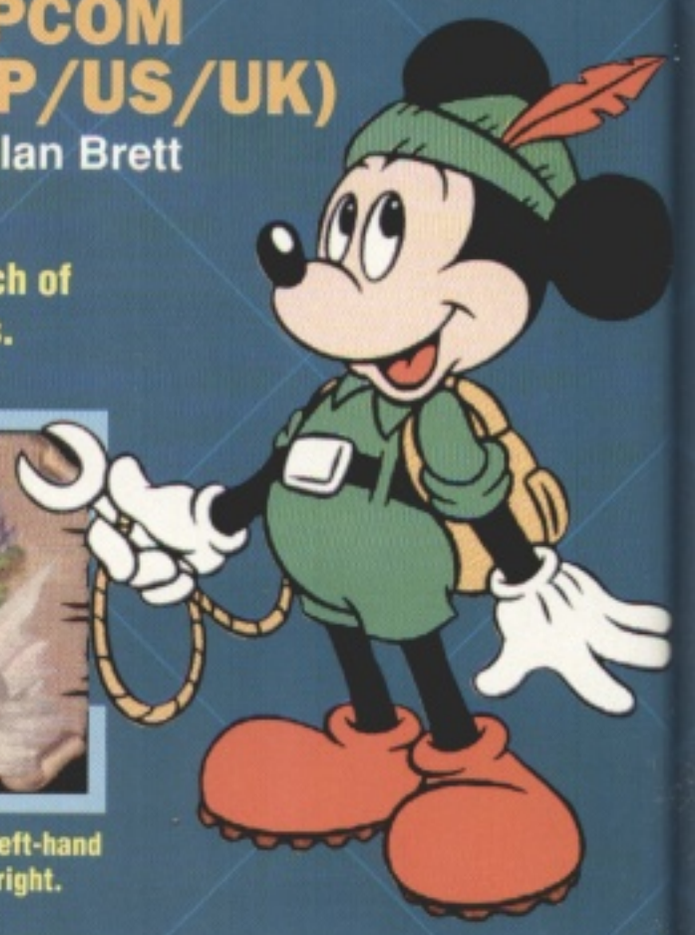
VERDICT: A very Japanese game, but one whose eccentricities don't make up for slack programming. A shame, as we hoped for a game that lived up to the '*Don't Lose!*' name.

MAGICAL QUEST STARRING MICKEY MOUSE

SUPER PLAYER'S GUIDE

CAPCOM (JAP/US/UK)

By Allan Brett



You'll find *Mickey's Magical Quest* reviewed briefly on page 76, on account of its UK release this month, but we'll tell you now – we like the game a lot, even if doesn't take that long to complete. And, although it *is* possible to romp through it in no time, there are loads of extra bits and pieces to be found if you know where to look. Which you will now, thanks to our complete player's guide. It's been written by National Computer Games Championship 1992 winner Allan Brett.

The game's spread over six levels, with three or four stages and a boss in each one. Don't expect to get much help from me during the levels themselves – there's not really a lot I can tell you that you won't be able to work out easily for yourself. Instead, I'll make sure you don't miss any secret rooms, bonuses or shops, and tell you the best way of dealing with each of the end-of-level bosses.

Your quest begins up in the top left-hand corner. And finishes a bit to the right.

TREETOPS

LEVEL 1-1

1 Enter the house and talk to the old man. Upon leaving, use the gold blocks to jump up onto the roof. Then walk left to find a clump of gold blocks which conceal a secret room.

A little further on from the house, grab a tomato and use it to fly up and forwards. You should see a row of little platform clouds. Keep moving from cloud to cloud, and as you reach the last one jump as far forward as you can to reach a platform and a block containing an extra energy heart.

LEVEL 1-2

No big secrets for this level – just try to stay on the runaway tomatoes. As the second tomato runs off the ramp and over the pond, jump onto the single silver block and then onto the top of the trees. Proceed forward to find some gold blocks hiding a shop.

MID-LEVEL BOSS

2 The difficulty setting dictates how many hits the boss will take. As he flies about, take any opportunity to 'bottom bounce' on his head. When he stops to release the baby bats, get as far away from him as possible. Bounce on a bat and throw it at the boss. He shouldn't take too long to die.

LEVEL 1-3

3 No advice here – just head right and be careful.

LEVEL 1-4 – BOSS

4 There are several ways to kill this boss, and they're all dead easy. You can either use the gold bricks (from the pink one), or use the bits of shell that the boss discards when you hurt him. Or you can simply bottom bounce on him. Be careful towards the end though, as he tries to jump on you. A well-timed jump, aimed so that he leaps up underneath your bottom bounce, should see him off quickly.

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DARK FOREST

LEVEL 2-1

1 Near the beginning of this bit, just before you reach the swamp with a monster in it, there are some gold blocks. Go into the swamp and swim underneath the branch to reach these blocks. They lead to a secret passage which contains an extra energy heart.

LEVEL 2-2

Simple. Swim through the tree sap (urgh!) and walk off the branch when you emerge. Push LEFT whilst falling to land on a branch leading to a shop.

MID-LEVEL BOSS

2 Simply avoid the spines, power up and blast him.

LEVEL 2-3

3 The mallet-wielding tree-stumps are a pain in the neck, but they're not too hard to avoid.

LEVEL 2-4 – BOSS

4 This boss is a real doddle! Change into your magician's outfit, power up and go get 'im. Try to keep away from him while blasting continuously and you'll dispose of him really quickly.

FIRE GROTTO

LEVEL 3-1

1 My only advice here is to suggest that you always clear a path for yourself, and don't bust a gut going for a particular block. (Although hard-to-reach ones do contain nice things!)

MID-LEVEL BOSS

2 This one can be quite hard. Your best bet is to keep moving, and keep blasting him with magic.

LEVEL 3-2

3 Here you get the fireman's outfit. Walk along until you reach a big square block on a platform. Push it off with your hose onto the platform below. Now you can use this to reach a platform moving up and down. At the top is a door leading to a secret room.

Also, by the sea of flame, where a platform moves diagonally (which keeps catching fire), jump past the platform to the right to reveal some blocks. The big block contains a 1-up. Finally, after going up the slope, stay on the fifth platform and it will go through the gap in the ceiling, leading to some coins.

LEVEL 3-3

4 The room down the little shaft near the start is more trouble than it's worth. Where the fire goes up and down, go down the second drop of water for an energy heart. At the scattering of silver blocks there's a 1-up near the bottom and a shop at the top. Use your hose to position the blocks.

LEVEL 3-4 – BOSS

5 This fiery boss changes colour to blue as you hose him. Don't give him too much of a break, as he heals himself if you leave him alone for long periods (especially on the 'hard' setting). And don't forget to keep topping up your water level.

PETE'S PEAK

LEVEL 4-1

1 On the third ledge above the area where there are lots of eggs, look for a silver platform moving from side to side. Hook onto the platform and you should be taken to another platform underneath a large gold block containing a 1-up. Drop off the platform and punch LEFT to land on a ledge with a shop door on it.

LEVEL 4-2

Go down the third hole and swing to the right for an extra energy heart.

LEVEL 4-3 – BOSS

2 Is this boss easy or what? Simply keep hanging onto the pegs until the bird flies past you, and then nick his egg before he cracks it and then just throw it at him.

SNOWY VALLEY

LEVEL 5-1

1 Use the fireman on this level, and keep an eye out for the little ice jewels in the sky (which look suspiciously like the chaos emeralds from *Sonic The Hedgehog* to me). By spraying these, temporary platforms are raised which can lead to coins and – on this particular level – a 1-up.

LEVEL 5-2

2 Not much on this level except sky, stars, ice etc. It's still not all that easy, though, and success or failure basically hangs on whether or not you can memorise the layout of the level, so you know when it's best to hitch a lift in the saucer-things, and when it's best to leap out and strike out on your own. Manage that and you'll be fine.

LEVEL 5-3

3 Wimp! (*Ho hum – Ed.*) This one's a case of working out a routine to stay out of his way while inflicting lots of damage on him. Use the magician, and blast the fiendish baddy from the other side of the screen. Also, for safety – and this means a fair amount of character-changing – use the hose to stop his snowballs in their tracks.

PETE'S CASTLE

LEVEL 6-1

1 Keep to the floor and go right until you reach the trampoline, and go down the water-filled hole beneath it. Swim around to find some coins. A little further on, a big stretch of water conceals a shop at the bottom. Swim down to reach it. Further still, grab an 'up' block and use it to go straight up to reach an archer and a door to your left. Go through to reach a 1-up, and then get yourself to the end of the level. (If you're interested, there are some coins on the platform below the exit door.)

LEVEL 6-2

2 If you can't do this you're a pretty hopeless case.

EMPEROR PETE

1 Pete's just as easy as the rest to dispose of. (*Oh for heaven's sake – Ed.*) Keep blasting him with magic and once in a while wait for the flying lamps to appear so you can top up your magic gauge. Then blast him again until he dies. Now sit back, relax, and watch the end sequence.

LEVEL 6-3

3 Use the hose to shift the silver blocks and avoid the cannon-balls. An extra energy heart is hidden in a big gold block by a door facing right. Look around – it's not hard to find. For the final fight with Emperor Pete, find two doors facing each other and enter the one on the left.

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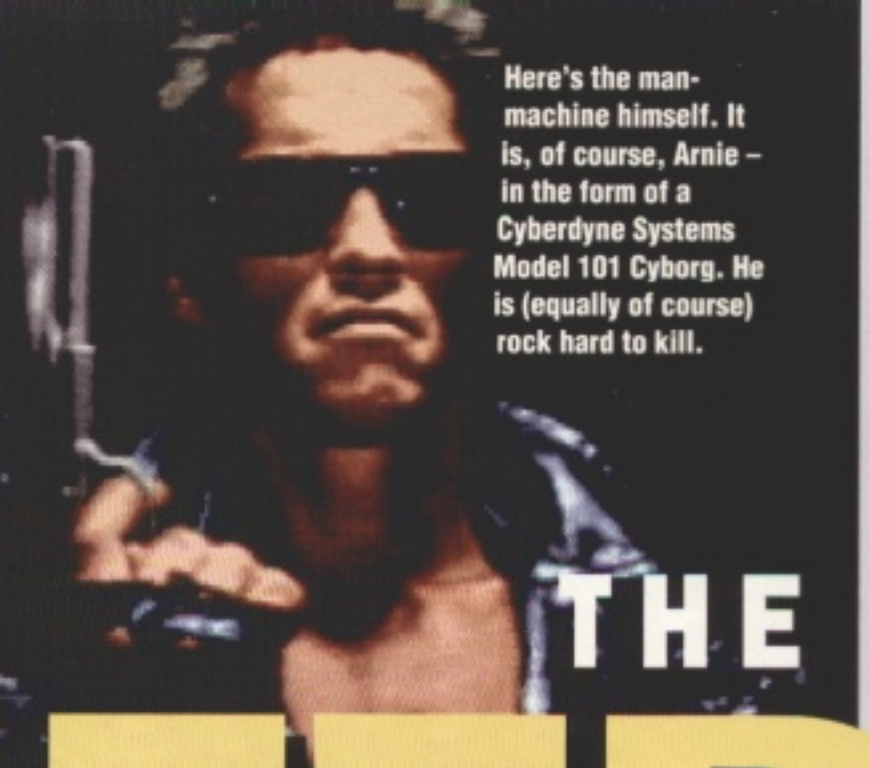
GamesMaster, you see, is a way of life. It won't just give you the lowdown on the *entire* video games scene, including arcades, it'll also give you challenges involving top indy-rock, techno-rave bands such as Sunscreem.

And since GamesMaster is by far the biggest video games mag in Europe, who do you think will be giving you the best exclusives, the most shocking news and the wittiest captions? Us. And we're also rock hard.



Here's the man-machine himself. It is, of course, Arnie – in the form of a Cyberdyne Systems Model 101 Cyborg. He is (equally of course) rock hard to kill.

THE TERMINA

Those itching to play the almost unstoppable Terminator cyborg are headed for a disappointment – you can't. You *can*, however, get kicked all over the shop by him, which some would argue is almost as good...

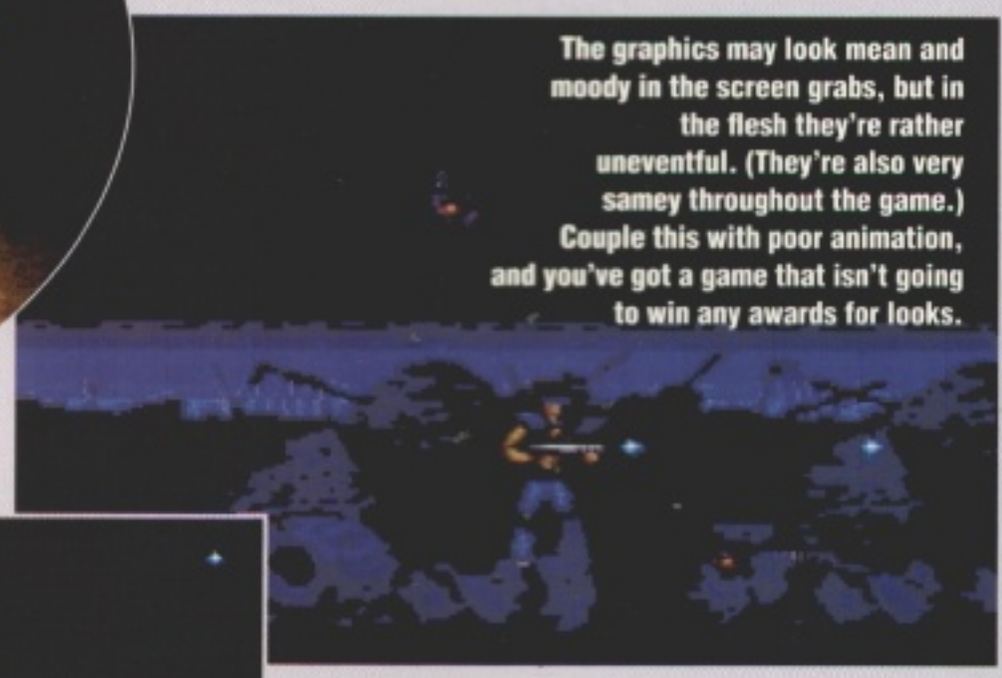
UK Release

Game: The Terminator
Publisher: Mindscape
Developer: In-house
Price: £TBA
Release: May
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

THE TERMINATOR: A BRIEF BEGINNER'S GUIDE

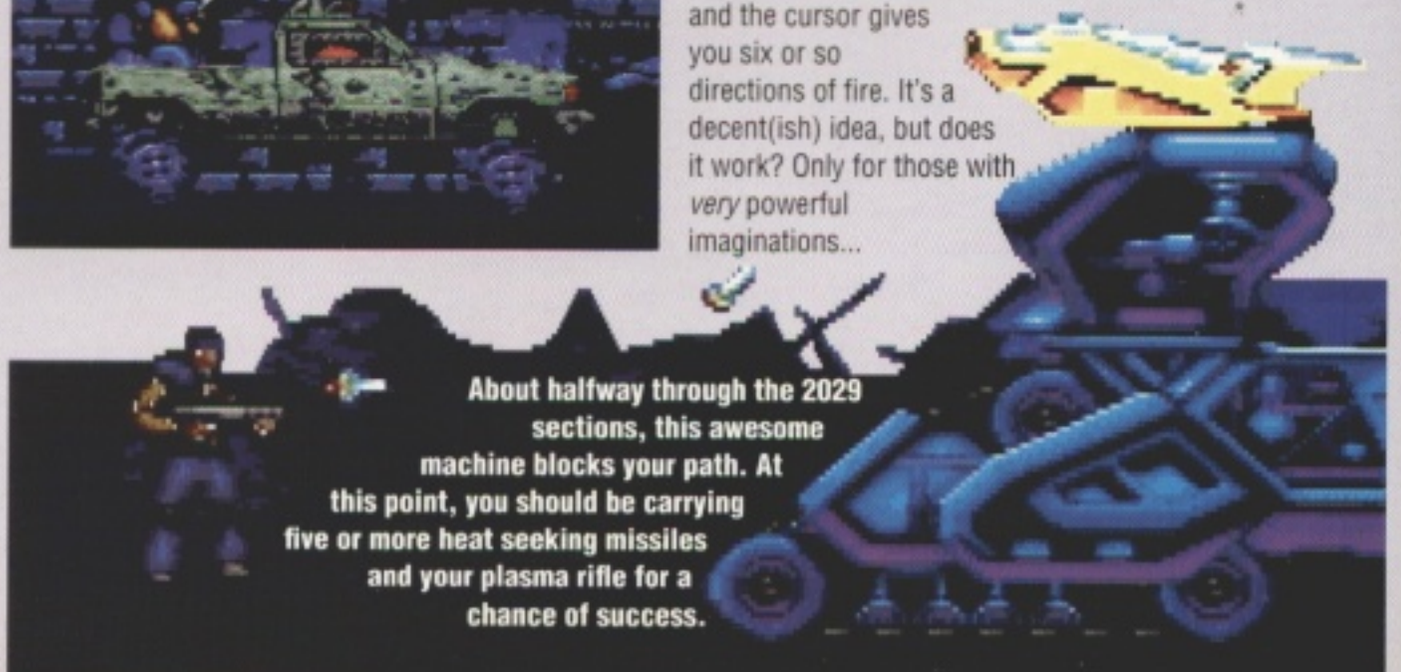
What we have here, beneath all the film licence glamour, is a very standard platform game structure – you can play *The Terminator* (the game) quite happily without the faintest idea of what the film plot is, or what's really going on at all. That said, however, familiarity with the movie will increase your playing enjoyment radically, so for those who don't already know it like the back of their hand, we're tempted to suggest you go rent the video. Not only is it ace, it will also save us the trouble of explaining the theories of time, space, and alternative possible futures for approximately the next five issues. In brief, though, our man, Kyle Reese, is a freedom fighter from the year 2029, a veteran of a future war between men and machines that mankind seems to be losing. The machines have decided that the best way to totally crush human resistance is to kill their inspirational leader – and the best way to do that is to send an almost unstoppable cyborg back in time to ice his mum before he's even conceived! Kyle zooms back in time to stop the Terminator, and the stage is set for – yes! – an almighty battle royal.

The Terminator kicks off back in the year 2029, where the machines rule and humans are in a desperate fight for survival. Kyle (ie you) has to make it through the early stages – and a sea of Terminators – to the time travel station before the game *really* gets going. There you'll get yourself transported back through time to 1984. Your mission: to find and protect Sarah Connor, mother-to-be of your much-loved boss John.



The graphics may look mean and moody in the screen grabs, but in the flesh they're rather uneventful. (They're also very samey throughout the game.) Couple this with poor animation, and you've got a game that isn't going to win any awards for looks.

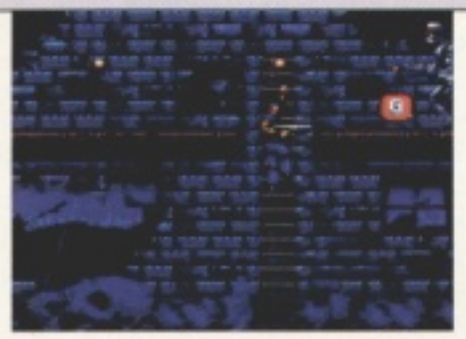
The game style changes totally for the first end-of-level guardian. The scrolling halts, and you jump into an armoured pick-up to take on a giant Hunter-Killer. Here, the L and R buttons control the pick-up, and the cursor gives you six or so directions of fire. It's a decent(ish) idea, but does it work? Only for those with *very* powerful imaginations...



About halfway through the 2029 sections, this awesome machine blocks your path. At this point, you should be carrying five or more heat seeking missiles and your plasma rifle for a chance of success.

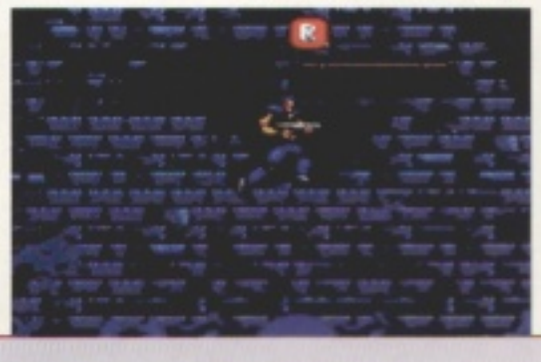
Connor, Connor, Connor... got it! Or has he? In fact, the Terminator offs two completely-unconnected-with-any-future-resistance-leader Sarah Connors before finding the right one – a vital mistake that gives Kyle time to catch up and try to whisk *our* Sarah to safety. Whew, eh?

FUTURE FIREPOWER



That 'G' stands for grenades. You can carry 'em, lob 'em – or hollow them out to make a set of attractive ornamental cigarette lighters.

These 'R's make your gun fire faster and blow stuff up quicker – jolly useful, when you think about it.



Ah, but here's the *really* useful stuff. The 'S's are heat-seeking missiles, while the box next to it bumps up your energy bar at the top.

If you can make anything out from the gloom, this is Reese plummeting naked to earth in 1984, after going through a time machine-thingy (or something).

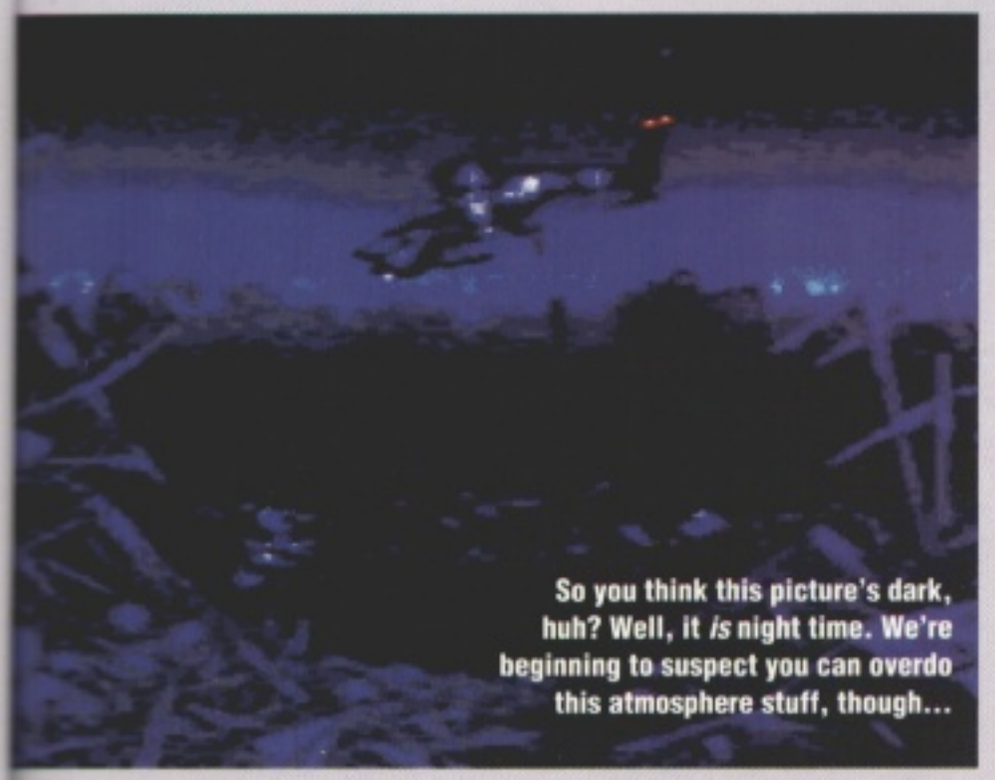
TOR

1984: THE LAST BATTLE

Here we are, back in 1984! Level two features far too much crouching – the problem is, you keep getting shot from off-screen (very unfair), and crouching down all the time is the only real way to avoid it.

Ever get the feeling the whole world's against you? To impede your progress even more, a chopper pops up above to rooftops to blast away even more of your energy. Meanwhile, you can't safely move – your sprite's limited angles of fire makes you rather a sitting duck.

This guy, and a bunch of his friends, didn't get a role in the film – and they're pretty mad about it! So mad, in fact, that they've turned out in force to throw knives and petrol bombs at our chap!



So you think this picture's dark, huh? Well, it *is* night time. We're beginning to suspect you can overdo this atmosphere stuff, though...

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

You know the Terminator, of course. Living tissue over a metal endo-skeleton, he can punch through solid steel, and shrugs off .45 slugs like they're so many snowflakes – hearing about the SNES *Terminator* game, I couldn't wait to play him.

Except, of course, that I had to. Wait, that is. Mindscape's new release is firmly based on the first film, and that means the cyborg's the baddy. Instead of Arnie, we get to run around as freedom fighter Kyle Reese, a decidedly ordinary guy in a pair of 501s. (Luckily, denim seems to have become chemically restructured in the future, so it can withstand eight or so hits from a plasma rifle – with only minimal flashing by the occupant – but even so. The feeling of invulnerability I was looking forward to from the game just ain't here.)

What is here, however, is a familiar platform game structure. Familiar, and yet at the same time almost completely useless – *The Terminator*, it pains me to tell you, boasts some of the biggest platform game pitfalls known to man.

For example, the fact that you keep being shot at from off-screen is not only annoying (and unfair), it also forces you to crawl along at a pathetically slow pace, so you've got a chance to waste the offending off-screen sprites before they kill you. Very tedious. Even worse, the game keeps putting you in situations where you have precious little choice but to jump off a platform blind and just hope for the best – there's no way of telling whether a new one is going to crop up in your path or not. This is a dreadful tactic on the part of the game designers, and one I'd hoped we'd seen the last of years ago.

Couple these gameplay flaws with that fact that it's not exactly brilliant in the looks department either – sure, the game's fairly atmospheric-looking, but it's also among the most unimaginative I've played recently too – and things start to fall apart. There's nothing that could qualify as a genuine 'neat touch' here, that's for sure, with the intro and ending screens probably better-looking than anything that appears in the actual game.

There is, however, one area where *The Terminator* excels. The background soundtrack is brilliant – perfectly suited to the game, with great sampled sound effects that really boost the excitement levels. Big explosions, loud gunfire – you just can't beat it.

To sum up, then, we've got a pretty average game on our hands here. True, the *Terminator* license has not been completely wasted, but neither is this a film game fit to hold its head up alongside the likes of *Batman Returns*, also reviewed this issue. What it is, is a fairly atmospheric effort, with plenty of action, but a few stupid errors to the gameplay that can make playing it a frustrating experience. We often criticise games for having too many continues and restart points, but in this case there are far too few – an equally annoying state of affairs. The bottom line is that *The Terminator* will seem rather outdated to many, with a look reminiscent of early SNES games, and is decidedly not a must-buy.

● Rich Pelley

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
53%	86%	42%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	59%
55%		

VERDICT: The *Terminator* license has plenty of potential, so it's a bit of a shame to see such a lacklustre game based on it. Plenty of action, but old fashioned graphics, repetitive gameplay and a lack of imagination – plus assorted glaring faults – combine to create a very ho hum game. Mindscape seem to be relying on the name alone for pulling power here – never a happy state of affairs.

SUPER BIKURI MAN

Japanese Release

Game: Super Bikuri Man
Publisher: Interbec
Price: Approx £45
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

The fight is interrupted when Dark Hera treads in the half-time blackcurrant-flavoured Instant Whip. (It's a nightmare to get off your shoes!)

One of *Super Bikuri Man*'s selling-points is that you get to beat the living daylights out of Bertie Basset.

Those helicopters passing overhead represent what is surely the worst special effect in any game ever. You've really got to see them to understand exactly why.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

I hope you won't dismiss it as hollow game-reviewer bravado if I tell you that I finished *Super Bikuri Man* on my first go. In about 10 minutes. On 'difficult'. It's just that this fact is central to the tirade that is to follow.

Now, we've looked at dozens of *Street Fighter II* clones over the last few months. None of them have been particularly good, and some have been utterly appalling. But none of them have been quite *this* bad. On the face of it, *Super Bikuri Man* looks much like any other *SFII* wannabe – *Brass Boss*, for example, or *Power Athlete*. In fact, in many ways it appears to make improvements. The characters look slightly better than we've come to expect, especially the robot-type things, and the intro sequence isn't too bad.

But playing the game is simply a case of pressing 'A' over and over, occasionally dodging a special move from your opponent. I only ever got beaten once, and that was just because I wanted to see what would happen. Things aren't much better in two-player mode – there aren't enough moves or differences between characters to hold one's attention.

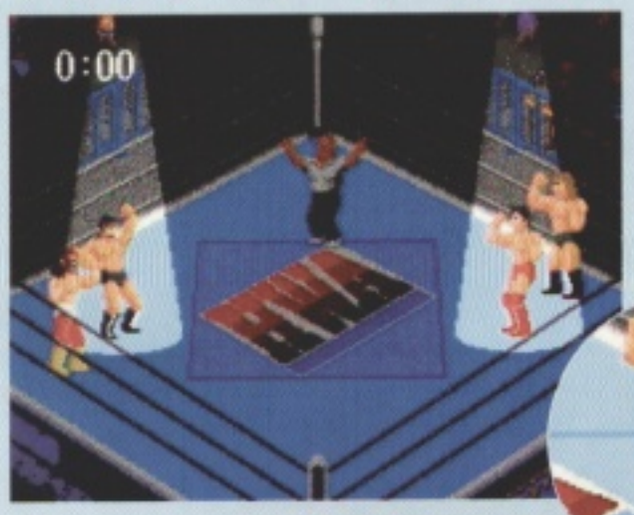
Next to *Street Fighter II* this looks hopelessly nob. Whatever you do, don't buy it.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
50%	35%	22%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	18%
12%		

VERDICT: If it wasn't for *Pitfighter*, this would be the worst beat-'em-up ever. So a bit of a narrow escape there, then, eh?

SUPER FIRE PRO WRESTLING 2



'Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the Pavilion in Bath for another all-star evening of, er, Japanese wrestling. I'm your referee for tonight's event, and I'll be making sure we have a nice clean match.'

Well, that's what he thought, anyway.

Left: 'Oi! You lot, get back in this ring right now!' Honestly, we've never seen such a badly behaved bunch. Inset: 'That's for trying to pull my shorts down!'

Japanese Release

Game: Super Fire Pro Wrestling
Publisher: Human
Price: Approx £50
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

The original *Super Fire Pro Wrestling* was a washout in one-player mode – the computer being virtually impossible to beat. With two players, however, it was great fun – much better than the *WWF* game – with all the different wrestlers having their own special moves. Most UK mags failed to grasp this, however, and judged the game just on its one-player performance – and so gave it a slagging.

Thus we were probably the only people interested in seeing how the sequel turned out. It's sad to report, then, that the one-player mode is as bad as ever – though this is made up for by the fact that this new game supports Hudson Soft's Super Multitap adaptor (see issue 5), which lets four players play simultaneously. This is, inevitably, brill.

So how good is it? Well, as a multi-player game, *Super Fire Pro 2* is really enjoyable. True, the graphics and animation are laughable, but this somehow adds to the game's appeal. The main problem is the amount of Japanese text, so it's worth waiting to see if a translation appears. Good fun all the same, though.

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
70%	68%	82%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	72%
62%		

VERDICT: As a one-player game this is a dead loss, but with a Super Multitap four-player adaptor it's the best wrestling game by far. Lots of Japanese text, though.

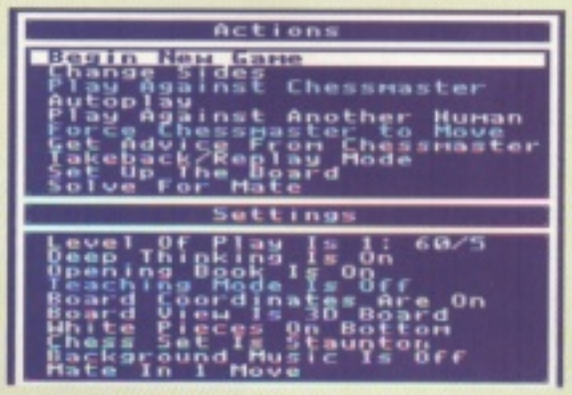
CHESSMASTER

UK Release

Game: Chessmaster
Publisher: Mindscape
Price: Approx £45
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

Such is the excitement generated by *Chessmaster* that the board's been invaded by its euphoric fans.

There are plenty of facilities that'll appeal to chess buffs. Like 'Hint'.



The Ceefax weather forecast? No, it's *Chessmaster*'s main menu. Isn't it great?

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Chessmaster scores points for two reasons: a) being the only chess game on the Super Nintendo, which will be reason enough for many people to buy it; and b) playing chess – as far as we can tell – to a pretty high standard.

With that said, it has to be pointed out that it's a pretty disappointing attempt to bring the world's most popular board game (probably) to the SNES. The presentation has to be the worst of any game on the system. Just have a listen to the awful, awful music – particularly the little jingles that are played every time a piece is moved – or run your eye down the dreary options menu that appears when you press SELECT. It makes you want to cry, it really does.

Of course, none of that is going to matter to the sort of person who goes in for chess games. He (erm, or she) is only going to be worried about whether it works or not – which it does – and if it has all the features one would normally want in a chess program – which this does too. But it might as well be running on a cheese grater for all the effort that's gone into making it look nice.

● Jonathan Davies

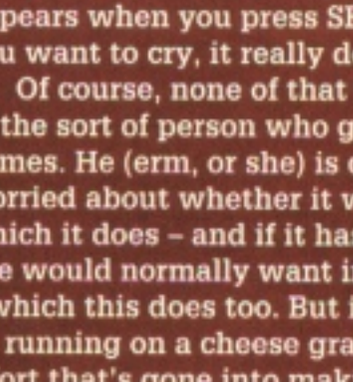
GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
30%	4%	60%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	55%
80%		

If you're after a chess game for your SNES, your search is over. But you could probably get a pocket chess computer for half the price with no obvious disadvantages.

WARPSPEED

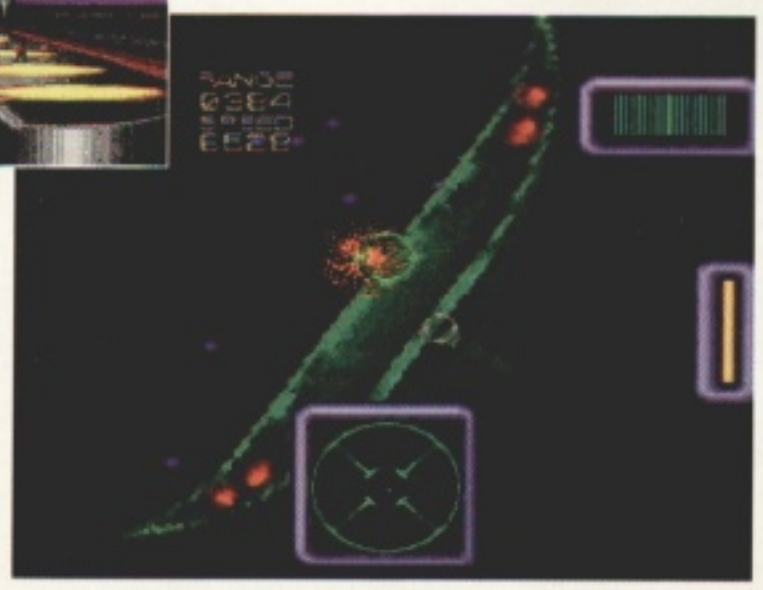
UK Release

Game: Warpspeed
Publisher: Accolade
Price: £44.99
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit



The long range scanner is used to select your destination.

Being promoted in the hangar makes it all worth while. Well, that's a lie actually...



And this is what it's all about – a single ship thrown about in Mode 7 that looks very silly indeed. Shoot these and you get to select other areas of the map in which to go and shoot some more of them.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Space exploits on consoles are ropy territory, because all they usually involve is flying into a starfield and shooting a few spaceships, then docking in a space station and being told your shot/hit ratio. And that's what we got when the PC game *Wing Commander* arrived on the SNES. Some people enjoy this kind of thing, but I've never been able to believe that a few badly animated blocky sprites were anything other than just that. The thing all these games lack is realism, and this applies to *Warpspeed*.

It's a really crude shoot-'em-up with the silliest use of Mode 7 I've seen for ages. As Mode 7 can only work on a single background image, the sum total of all the Mode 7 enemy ships on screen at any one time sadly never rises above, er... one.

So, the graphics let it down a bit then. (Well, okay, a lot). But the go-to-sector-X-and-shoot-the-spaceships gameplay didn't grab me either. There are a fair few missions to fly, ranks to achieve, sectors to explore and even campaigns to fight in, but it's too easy, extremely dull and very repetitive. When you compare this to *Starfox*, you'd never believe they ran on the same console.

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
34%	22%	30%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	32%
34%		

VERDICT: Graphically and sonically this is extremely crude. *Wing Commander* fans might take to the gameplay, but for the rest of us it's a very dated concept.

SHOOT STARS!

We put it off for as long as we possibly could. But we've finally had to come to terms with the fact that we've never done a joystick and joypad round-up. Think of the following as our penance.

The first question we ought to be asking here is: why? Why would anyone decide to toss aside a perfectly serviceable SNES controller and spend anything up to £80 on a replacement that, to all intents and purposes, does the same job?

One reason is that many people just don't get on with Super NES controllers. Or joypads in general. They prefer to wrap their hands around – for want of a less snigger-provoking phrase – something that's got a shaft with a ball on the end. After all, how many coin-op games have you ever played that are controlled by joypads? It's also worth considering that, whether you're a joypad fan or not, some games simply aren't suited to them – just try Zangief's spinning piledriver with a SNES controller.

But that doesn't explain the huge number of replacement joypads that are also available. What they've got over the standard-issue Nintendo item – in common with most of the joysticks – is extra features. Rapid fire is standard virtually across the board, and is something you'll wonder how you ever managed without. Slow motion is another luxury you won't find on the standard item.

The range of features available is one of the criteria we've used in coming up with our ratings, along with things like ergonomics, build-quality and value-for-money. (And how nice they look.)

STEALTH

Manufacturer: Hi-Tech Systems
Supplier: Shekhana Consoles
Price: £30
Features: two-speed rapid fire; slow motion

We assume this one got its name from its resemblance to the American Stealth bomber. It's quite nice and quiet, too. The trouble is, the stick itself is all wobbly, and the travel on it is a bit long. The L and R buttons are awkwardly placed, too, clobbering some of *Street Fighter II*'s more intricate moves. If you like your joysticks to sport Stars and Stripes, however, this is obviously the one to go for. (And it *is* reasonably priced.)

☆☆☆

QJ TOPFIGHTER

Manufacturer: Spectravideo
Supplier: High Street shops (or see page 77 for a special offer)
Price: £69.99
Features: Programmable; adjustable six-way rapid fire; adjustable slow motion

Massively heavy, and dead flash, this has got just about every feature you could possibly imagine, and performs extremely well, though perhaps not *quite* as well as the Fighting Stick.

☆☆☆☆

ANGLER

Manufacturer: Beeshu/Euromax
Supplier: High Street shops
Price: £24.99
Features: Hands-free, four-way rapid fire; two-speed slow motion

Goodness knows who chose the colour scheme for this one! It's much bigger than it needs to be, too. And the L and R buttons make your fingers bend all funny. But it *is* solidly built and, despite a slightly squidgy direction pad, works okay.

☆☆☆

T ING

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JOYSTICKS AND JOYPADS ON TEST

◀ TRAILBLAZER

Manufacturer: Slick Sticks
Supplier: High Street shops
Price: £29.99
Features: Slow motion; hands-free rapid fire

Although this is basically a version of the Stealth stick that's been re-badged for sale in the UK, for some reason we got on with it a lot better. Perhaps it's just a difference between samples, but that wobbliness in the stick is all gone, making it pleasant to use and very accurate. The buttons are still awkwardly placed, however, so we couldn't recommend it for *SFII*.

☆☆☆☆

▼ SUPERCON 2

Manufacturer: QuickShot
Supplier: High Street shops
Price: £12.99
Features: two-speed rapid fire; slow motion

This is your bread-and-butter joypad – a straight replacement for the standard-issue model with the addition of a basic rapid fire facility and slow motion. It doesn't look great, and feels rather light and flimsy, but it works splendidly and we found ourselves using it an awful lot here in the office. Independent rapid fire for each button would have been nice.

☆☆☆☆

▶ QUICKFIRE QF-5

Manufacturer: QuickFire
Supplier: Shekhana Consoles
Price: £15
Features: Rapid fire; slow motion; detachable 'thumb-control knob'

We're not convinced by this one. It's an odd shape, for a start – like a Bat-a-Rang gone wrong. It's also very plasticky, and we doubt that the detachable (and uncomfortable) 'thumb stick' would stand up to much punishment.

☆☆

▲ CITY BOY

Manufacturer: Honest
Supplier: Shekhana Consoles
Price: £55
Features: Rapid fire; slow motion

Now this one we don't recommend. Although it's similar to the popular Apollo stick, it looks (and sounds) naffer. It's uncomfortable, too stiff and moves too far, and although the buttons feel okay, they're too far apart. But, it *is* supplied with connections for nearly *every* games console.

☆☆

▶ SUPER ADVANTAGE

Manufacturer: Asciiware
Supplier: Shekhana
Price: £65
Features: Adjustable, hands-free, six-way rapid fire; adjustable slow motion

This one looks gorgeous, and fits in perfectly with the SNES, even if it does lose marks for those loathsome US-style purple knob things. In use it's terrific, too – light and precise, with nice buttons. Pricey, but an official UK release should sort that out.

☆☆☆☆☆

QUEST

Manufacturer: Slick Sticks
Supplier: High Street shops
Price: £14.99
Features: six-way, two-speed rapid fire; slow motion

Lightweight, and bravely shaped, this one didn't endear itself to us. The direction pad is all squidgy, making it all too easy to hit the wrong directions. And the buttons are just a little bit too far apart, and don't really feel right.

★★

SN PROPAD

Manufacturer: Spectravideo
Supplier: High Street shops
Price: £16.99
Features: Hands-free, six-way rapid fire; slow motion

As you can probably tell, this one's see-through. And very nice it looks too (especially if you look underneath at all the circuit boards and chips and stuff). In action it seems much like any other joypad, although the buttons are a bit clicky and L and R are very tricky to get at.

★★★★

TURBO TOUCH 360

Manufacturer: Triax/Hornby Hobbies
Supplier: High Street shops
Price: £20
Features: Touch-sensitive; four-way rapid fire

Definitely the weirdest item on test, this, but one we've covered extensively before. It's touch sensitive, which means you just pass your thumb over the direction pad rather than actually moving anything. This takes some getting used to, and it's useless for things like driving games thanks to an awkward 'dead area' in the centre of the pad and the irritating rim around it. But it *is* good at *Street Fighter II*, and would make a useful supplement to a proper pad.

★★★

FIGHTING STICK

Manufacturer: Hori
Supplier: Shekhana Consoles
Price: £70
Features: Hands-free rapid fire; two-speed slow motion

This is an Nintendo-licenced product, which is odd as it looks as if it's been thrown together in a garage. It's hard, though, being made of what looks like military-grade steel. And it's wonderful to use – just right for *SFII* and the like.

★★★★★

THOSE IMPORTANT BITS

RAPID FIRE

While some games fire a continuous stream of bullets when you hold down a fire button, others just release a single one, and insist that you repeatedly hammer the button if you want more. This gets tiring fast – which is where rapid fire comes in. Switch it on and, when you hold down a button, a stream of rapid signals is sent to the SNES as if you're pressing the button really quickly. Much easier. Better sticks have a separate switch for each button. Cheaper ones have just the one switch for everything. Oh, and some have a 'hands-free' setting that permanently holds down the button, so you don't even have to do that. Watch out, too, for variable speed settings.

SLOW MOTION

This is designed for those moments in games when there's simply too much happening too quickly for you to be able to react. It slows the game down, letting you collect your thoughts and take on the baddies on a more level footing. The way it works is pretty crude, though – it simply simulates pressing the START button really fast lots of times – and you're unlikely to use it an awful lot.

PROGRAMMABLE STICKS

Swanky top-of-the-range sticks have memories able to store sequences of stick movements and button presses. You can program these movements onto one of a set of extra buttons, so they'll be executed perfectly whenever you press it. So you could, for example, put the sequence DOWN, RIGHT, DOWN/RIGHT, Y onto a button and, every time you pressed it, you'd get a dragon punch on *SFII*.

OTHERS TO CONSIDER

There are three other joysticks you might want to have a look at. We haven't included them in the main test on these pages because we've already looked at them before in *Super Play*.

CAPCOM POWER STICK

(£70)
We did a head-to-head between this and the Apollo joystick in issue 1, and placed the Apollo slightly ahead, reckoning that Capcom's offering looked a teeny bit flimsy. It *is* good, though.

★★★★

APOLLO JOYSTICK

(£60)
And here's the Apollo stick from the other half of issue 1's test – nice and tough, with connections for all popular consoles.

★★★★

XE-1 SFC

(£80-ish)
This high-tech item was covered in issue 2. It does *everything*, even things you'd never dream of, and we liked it a lot. But we did have trouble using it, as the instructions are all in Japanese.

★★★★

WIN! Supercon 2 controllers!

That's right! We've got five Supercon 2 controllers to give away! And winning them is dead easy – just a matter of answering a simple question, in fact. And here it is:

Who narrates *Thomas The Tank Engine And Friends* on telly? (The connection being that it's got the Fat Controller in. Okay?)

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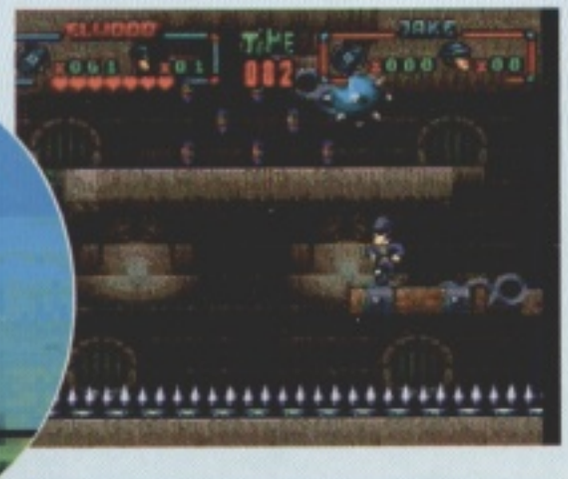
THE BLUES BROTHERS

'Why produce a game based on a brand new film when you can use an old, hopefully cheaper, one instead?' thought Titus Software. 'If JVC can do it (with *Super Star Wars*), then surely so can we.'

UK Release

Game: The Blues Brothers
Publisher: Titus
Developer: In-house
Price: £TBA (probably approx. £45)
Release: Late April
Players: 1 or 2
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit



Above: The two-player mode is a little dubious – each obstacle has to be negotiated twice, once by each player, theoretically making the game twice as hard. And should one die, it's life over for the both of you. Very annoying. Also you keep picking each other up and pushing each other along. Very, very annoying. Right: You can throw the baddies!

The scrolling doesn't quite know which character to follow, and (since our heroes don't remain central) you can easily be killed by a baddy that hasn't even appeared on screen yet. Still, it's better than the two-player mode on the Amiga. (That followed player one only, so player two kept scrolling right off screen!)

Dotted around the page we can see Jake and Elwood in various guises. Leave the control panel alone and they'll dance a little jig, while eat some cake and they turn into Super Brother (right).

Sometimes you can't help looking at *The Blues Brothers* and thinking, hmm – I can't remember *that* from the film.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Those backgrounds in the screenshots might look pretty Amiga-esque, but it's worth mentioning right away that the SNES version is really nothing to do with the Amiga one at all. Sure, they're both six-way scrolling multi-level platform games. And, true, both versions successfully shrunk the characters from the film into two of the cutest and (ahem) most lovable game sprites ever.

But the similarities end abruptly there, because the two versions play about as differently as, er, an oboe and a piano (except that wasn't as effective a metaphor as I was looking for). For a start, the Amiga version didn't let you fire anything, but here you throw records at the baddies. In the original the levels were big, but few. Here they are small, but copious. And so on.

But how come if the Amiga version earned scores around the likes of 87% (which it did), and we actually prefer the SNES version (which we do), we've only awarded it 68% (which we have)?

Three reasons, really. Reason one doesn't really count, because the small number of technical flaws (killed baddies that frustratingly reposition as you re-enter a screen) are just a bit annoying, rather than actually bad. Reason two, as the captions hopefully point out, is that the two-player mode is irritating, and certainly could have easily been a lot better. (Strangely though, no one seemed to mind that the two-player mode on the Amiga was so flawed it was virtually unplayable.) Reason three, however, is the biggy – the one to *really* put the cat amongst the pigeons. And this is simply one of competition.

The Amiga just doesn't boast any platform games to rank with *Mario/Mickey's Magical Quest/Tiny Toons/Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt*/whatever your favourite SNES platformer is, and so (on the Amiga) *The Blues Brothers* looked really good. However, as the Super Nintendo *does* have *Mario* etc, on the Super NES this only looks average. Hence the lower mark. Life's sometimes unfair like that.

● Rich Pelley

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
78%	73%	68%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	68%
70%		

VERDICT: A nice little platform game, though a bit simplistic, and out-classed by *Mario* et al. And it's not too easy, unlike many of its type.

COSMO GANG

THE PUZZLE

Last time the cute Cosmo Gang came to visit, we spent ages trying to blow them to bits. Now, after all that abuse, they're back and are just queueing up to be belted with balls. What a weird crowd...

This is the target game, where you have to solve set puzzles. Your first task should be to rotate this shape twice and plop it down on the right hand side...

...Next, rotate this shape once and, erm, plop it down on the right hand side as well (get the idea so far?)...

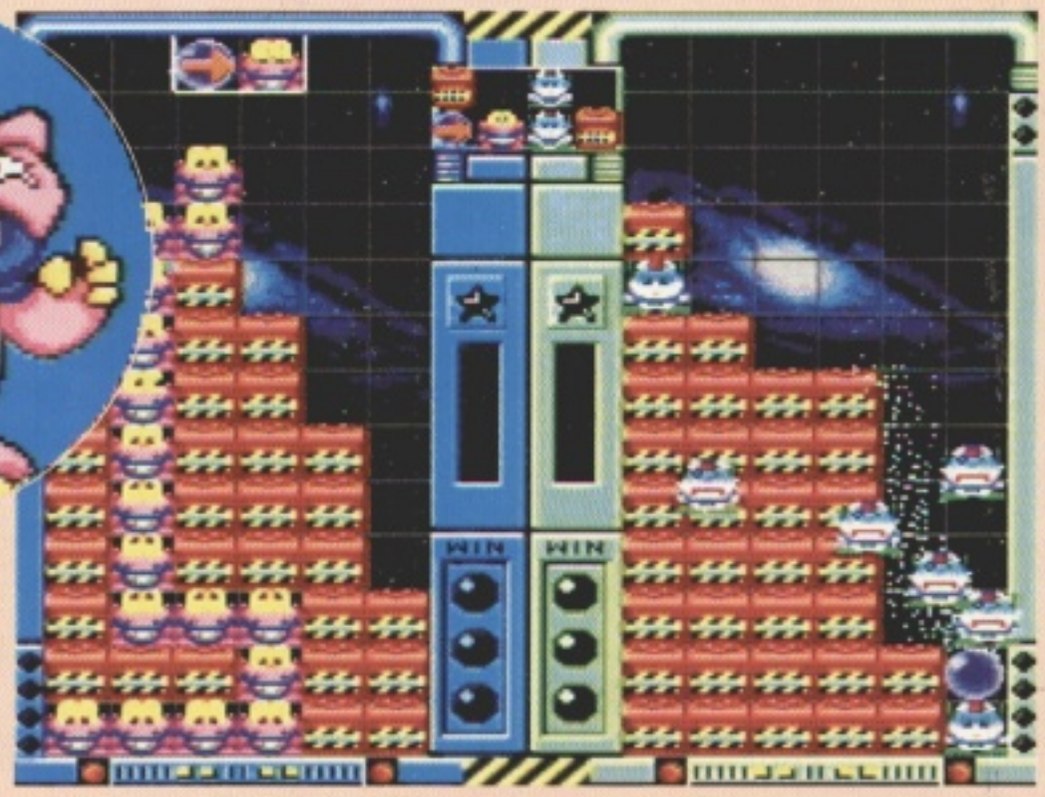
...The next block is already lined up. Just nudge it right and (oh dear) plop it down above the others...

...Like so, and then line it up with members of the Cosmo Gang beneath...

...A-ha! A ball. Okay, rotate it so that the little creature is underneath...

...And Robert, as they say, is your dad's brother.

Now you can move onto the next, harder, but almost identical stage.



Right: Here's a shot taken from a two-player game. As you can see, player one is in deep trouble. Above: A gratuitous picture of the token bad-guy.

Japanese Release

Game: Cosmo Gang: The Puzzle
Publisher: Namcot (Namco Ltd)
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx £45
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2 simultaneously
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

I've never really considered the Super NES to be a puzzler's machine: any game that has but a single static backdrop and one sprite dropping lazily down the screen is a real waste of hardware if you ask me.

Still, *Cosmo Gang: The Puzzle* is original, innovative and ingenious – if very easily mastered. True, its esoteric mixture of ball dropping and line clearing requires more tactical thinking than *Tetris*, but it still suffers from the random fortune element of a game like *Columns* on the Mega Drive. Just when you think you're doomed, one lucky ball drop clears a big chunk of aliens and you're back in the running. The other main problem is that, as with *Tetris*, the 'clear as many lines/aliens as you can' game grows tedious very quickly. Unless you adore chasing high scores, you'll soon forgo this in favour of the two-player game or the target game.

As with most head-to-headers, the two-player option is good fun. The twist is that any aliens cleared from your screen drop onto your opponent's, usefully screwing up any strategy they might have had.

Then there's the target game, where you have to get rid of all the aliens with limited balls (er, you, not the aliens) in a mean test of your quick-thinking and forward planning. For me, this is the high point of the game – but beware the passcode option, which involves writing down lots of elaborate Japanese script!

As puzzlers go, then, *Cosmo Gang* is a pretty good one; but the lasting interest plummets quite swiftly, and it's a bit expensive for an occasional time filler.

● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
55%	68%	64%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
42%		58%

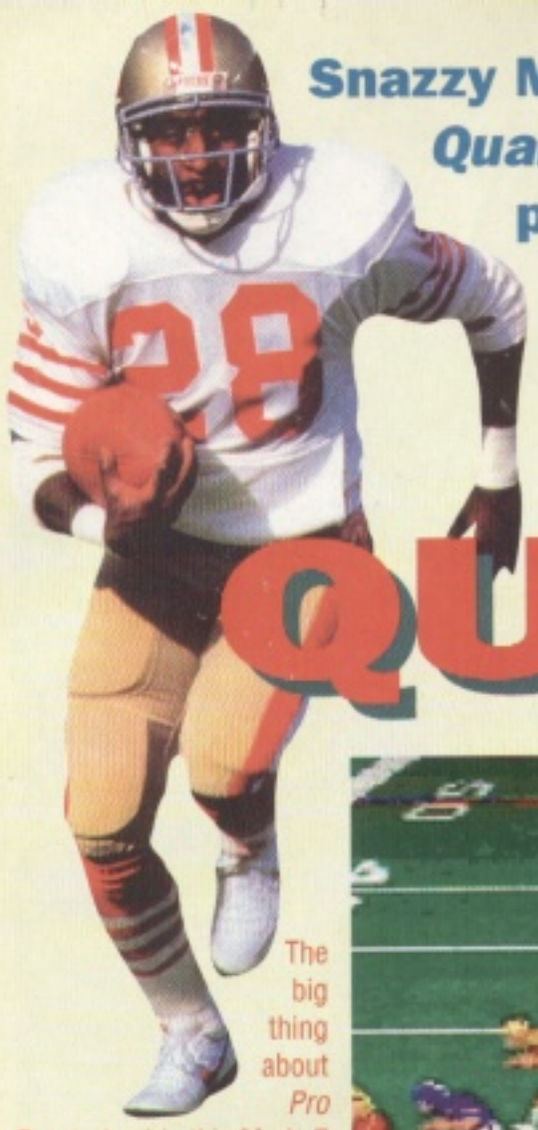
VERDICT: Slick, colourful puzzle with a high novelty factor. Doesn't push you or your SNES, though, and is ultimately cupboard-fodder.

Snazzy Mode 7 3D makes *Pro Quarterback look* far better than previous American football class leader *John Madden '93*. But does it play as well?

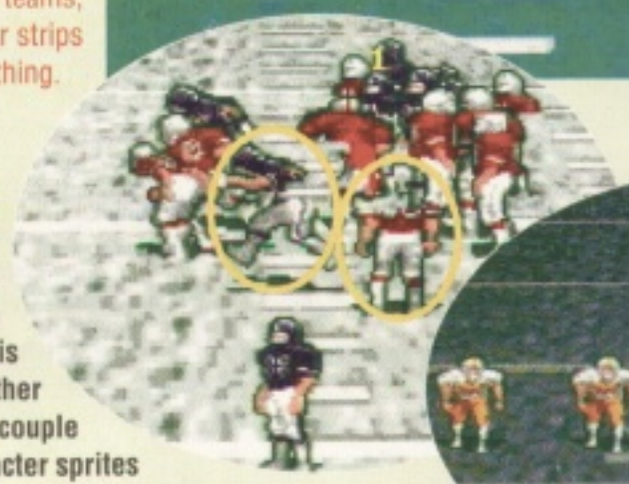
PRO QUARTERBACK

US Release

Game: Pro Quarterback
Publisher: Tradewest Sports
Developer: In-house
Price: £50-£60
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2 simultaneously
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit



The big thing about *Pro Quarterback* is this Mode 7 screen depiction, with play viewed from just behind the offensive team line. And though *Pro Quarterback* doesn't carry an NFL licence, and so doesn't feature real American football teams, the players wear strips similar to the real thing.



THE WORST BIT...

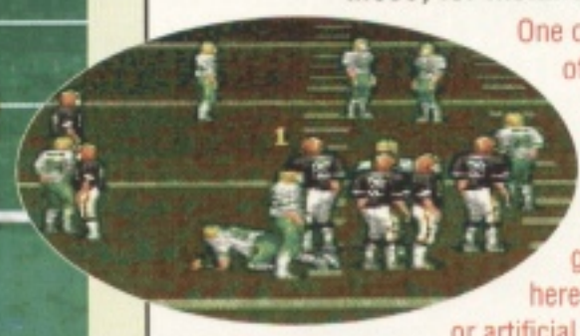
Here's one of the big problems with the game. On this fairly typical (if rather snowy) screen, a couple of the main character sprites are flickering away uncontrollably. (We've highlighted the guilty men, in case you weren't quite clear, by the way.)

...AND THE BEST BIT!

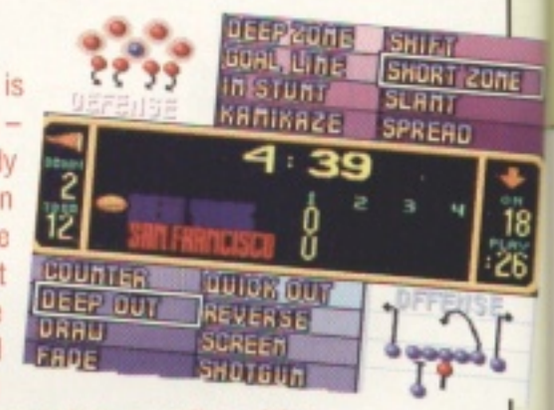
Punt! The use of Mode 7 is best as the screen follows the ball when it's kicked down the pitch.

ANY OPTIONS?

***Pro Quarterback* has plenty. How about these, for instance?:**

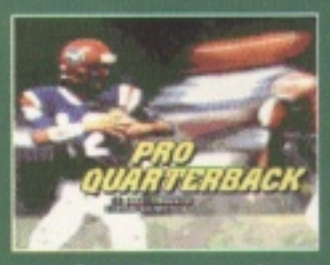


One of the options offered is a choice of pitch and weather conditions: choose between grass, mud (as here), dirt, snow, rain, or artificial turf. The game also allows you to pick how long you want each quarter to be, what kind of game you're playing (one-player game, head-to-head with two players, or two players as team-mates), and so on.



Now this is well done – one handy screen shows the different offensive and defensive plays you can select, as well as giving you info on how you're doing. The problem seems to be, however, that the other player can easily tell which play you've selected, and plan accordingly.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?



This is the first time we've seen the Tradewest Sports label (other software developers seem to be following EA's lead in this area), and the first time we've seen a Mode 7 American football game. You'd think the idea would work well, really putting you into the centre of the action, and initially it does – the graphics are attractive, with decent sprite animation, and a good 'zoomy in-and-out' feel to it as a player runs with, or kicks, the ball. The overall presentation, with the inevitable play diagrams, is good too.

However, this surface snazziness isn't enough to get you past the weaknesses of the game. For a start, the graphics don't hold up to close scrutiny, with flicker and other glitches appearing far too often. It's hard to tell what's going on at many points too, with the screen a mass of moving bodies – knowing which man has the ball, which one your opponent is controlling, and what the distance is between the two is, can be hard work at the best of times.

More so than recently reviewed rivals *Madden* or *Super Play Action Football*, *Pro Football* suffers from a dreadful repetition to the gameplay too. When you're on the offensive you basically get two choices – to throw the ball, where hopefully it'll be caught, the catcher will run forward, get jumped on by an opposition team guy, and you'll make 20 yards; or to run with it, which nine times out of ten means you'll get jumped on right away and make exactly 0 yards. It all gets a bit samey far too soon.

With the forced perspective making it unclear what's going on most of the time, relating the little diagrams that show how each play works to what actually happens on screen can be tricky – certainly far harder than it is with its rivals, where you're looking right down on the players. This makes really getting into the strategy side of things a lot harder than it should be.

A failed experiment then – it looks interesting, and plays okayish, but fails to improve on its rivals, and trips over its feet a bit where it tries to do something new.

● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
77%	50%	55%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	62%
62%		

VERDICT: A lightweight American football game, with attractive Mode 7 graphics, but many glitches and unworkable strategy.

MAGIC SWORD

UK Release

Game: Magic Sword
Publisher: Capcom
Price: TBA (Approx. £45)
Release: April

'Take that, you fiend!' (For some reason our hero is attacking a wall.)

A change of chums, and just in the nick of time.

(What else but...) They've jumped out of their skins!

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

The strange thing about *Magic Sword* is that it's by Capcom, a company that isn't known for turning out crap games. But *Magic Sword* is completely without commendation.

Part of its troubles can be put down to the atrocious original coin-op. There's about one good idea in it – the way that you pick up 'chums' as you walk around, who follow you about and help to take on the baddies.

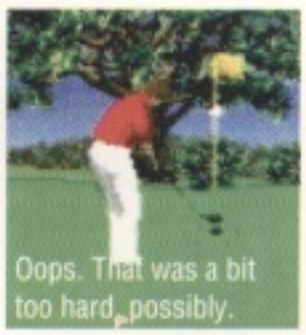
But the rest just can't be excused. The animation's awful, the game slows down at the slightest provocation, the sound effects are negligible, it all seems to keep flickering about the whole time and, despite the odd nice-looking sprite, the overall effect does very little to convince you to answer 'Yes' when you're asked if you want to continue.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
67%	55%	60%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
56%		58%

VERDICT: An awful game, basically. (All right, it *is* kind of quite good fun in a way, if you sort of look sideways at it and squint.)

PEBBLE BEACH GOLF

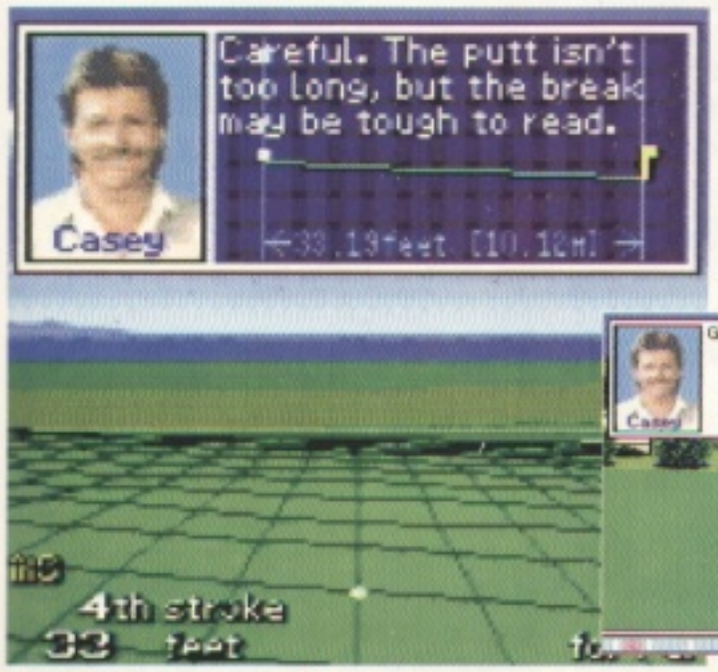

Oops. That was a bit too hard, possibly.

Why *do* they always clutter up the course with trees?

UK Release

Game: Pebble Beach Golf
Publisher: Nintendo
Price: TBA (Approx. £45)
Release: April

A handy close up of the ball.



A wire-frame rendition of the putting green.

We thought so, too.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

While we'd have to say that *Irem Skins* (not yet generally available in the UK) is probably the best golf game on the Super NES, it hasn't got enough substance to it for some people. If you're one of those people, you'll be wanting to look at *Pebble Beach* instead. It lacks *Skins*' easy-to-get-to-grips-with controls and ultra-fast Mode 7 graphics, but it plays a smashing game of golf and is probably the closest you'll get to the PC version of *PGA Tour Golf* on the SNES.

The graphics are pretty, the ball flies about realistically, the course is nicely designed, and it basically does everything you could hope for from a golf game.

The price you've got to pay is in the form of a slightly sluggish screen update, which means it takes a while to redraw everything when the viewpoint changes. It's certainly bearable, though, and much better than things like *Jack Nicklaus* and *PGA Golf*. The other snag is that it's only got one course, but the same is true of just about every other golf game on the Super Nintendo. Oh, and the music's hilarious.

A little old-fashioned looking, then, and some way short of perfect, but well worth a look if you're after a golf game.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
75%	59%	85%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
80%		82%

VERDICT: Although this is the only golf game officially available in the UK at the moment, it's not a bad choice, and *is* lots of fun – even if you don't like real-life golf.

BART'S NIGHTMARE

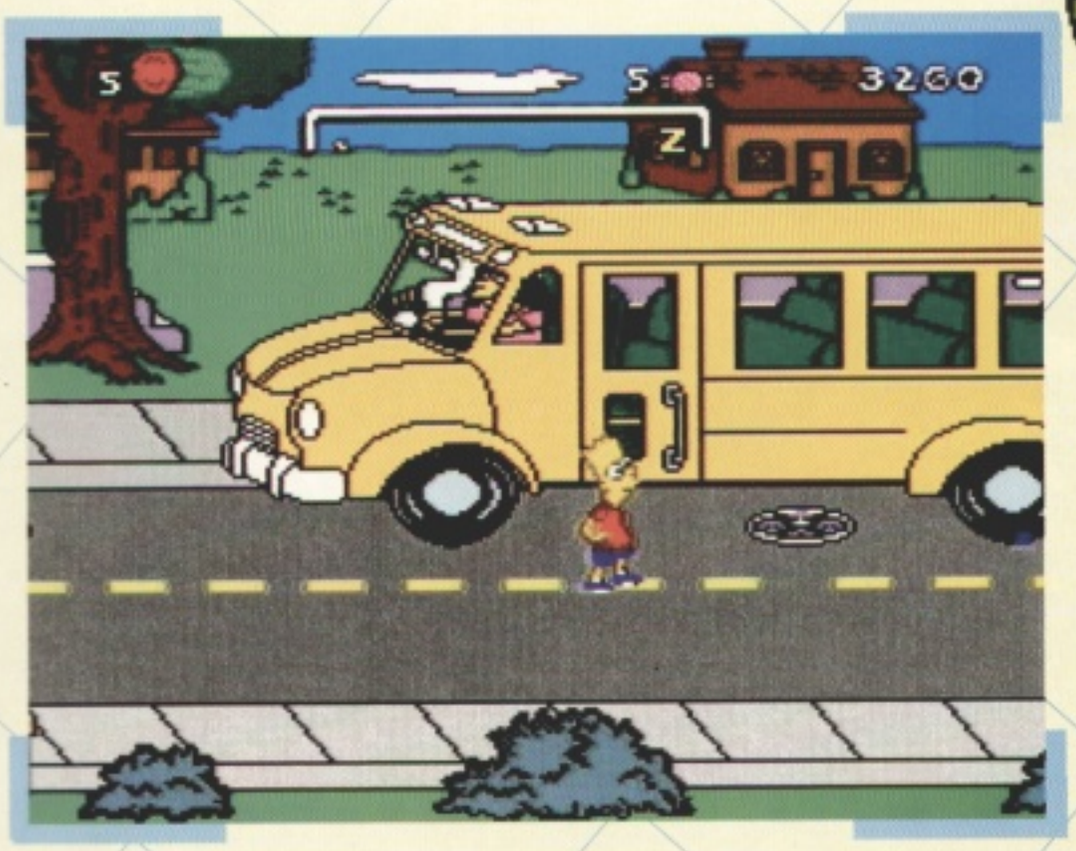
SUPER PLAYER'S GUIDE

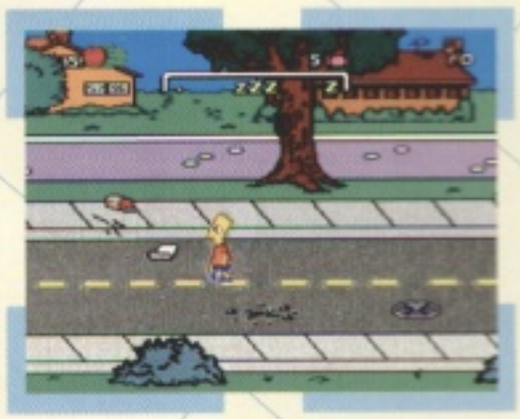
ACCLAIM(US/UK)

By Allan Brett

Whether you're a Simpsons fan or not (Bart, Homer and co *are* an acquired taste), you must admit that *Bart's Nightmare* is one of the better products of the cartoon's merchandising mania. While it doesn't overstretch itself in the actual game design, it succeeds utterly in bringing the atmosphere of the series to the SNES, and provides plenty of laughs along the way. It's by no means easy, though, which is where Allan Brett and his player's guide come in.

As owners of *Bart's Nightmare* will know, the game consists of a central bit where Bart's walking along a road, and then five little sub-games. To enter one of the sub-games you jump on a sheet of Bart's homework, whereupon you're given a choice of two doors. The colour of the door you go through dictates the sub-game you play. The difficulty of the sub-games varies, from easy (the scuba-diving section) to staggeringly difficult (the Bartzilla bit, and maybe Indiana Bart, too). So be careful out there.





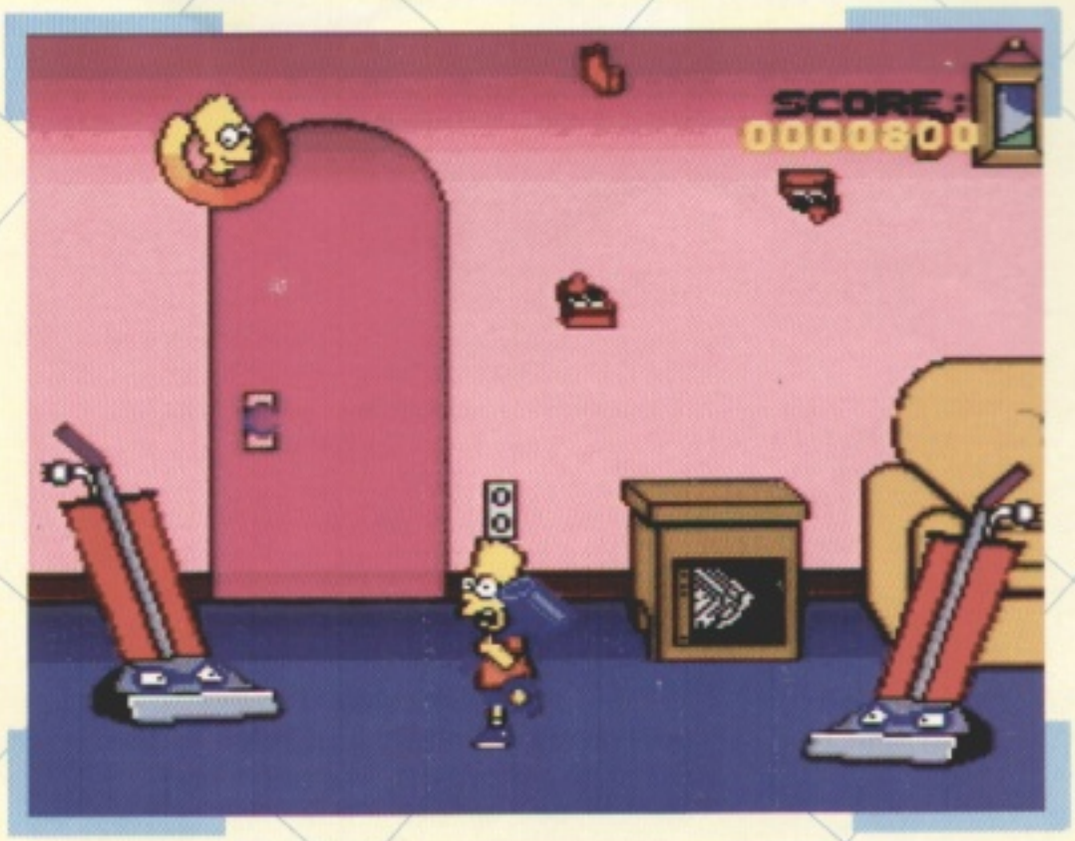
ON THE STREET

- A good approach to take in this bit is to walk along the dotted line in the middle of the road. That way you'll be able to avoid buses and most of the other hazards.
- Jump over the basketballs to get a skateboard to tear down the street with.
- If you're turned into a frog by Lisa, let an old granny give you a kiss to change back into Bart.

Take a leaf out of Bart's book (quite literally) and get whisked to one of the action-packed sub-games.

It's much easier if you walk down the middle of the road, but, if you're planning on trying it, go easy on the root beer and sasparilla.

- The curse of Lisa's saxophone will reverse your joypad controls. If this happens, simply turn your joypad upside down to play and it'll make things a lot easier.
- Walking on the furthest-away pavement scrolls the screen a lot quicker, but you'll have to be careful to jump the mailboxes.



Do the Shake 'n Vac and put the freshness back? Or, for a more effective way to remove unwanted odours or visitors, bash 'em with your mallet.

STAGE 1: ITCHY AND SCRATCHY
(Yellow door)

Living Room
Get a mallet and stay close to the wall to avoid being subjected to Itchy and Scratchy's various weapons. After the screen has scrolled along for a while, go past the psychotic telephone and grab the pest exterminator (the smoke gun). Keep shooting for a while, and then go upstairs.

Nine out of ten cats prefer flame-throwers – much more fun than wool.

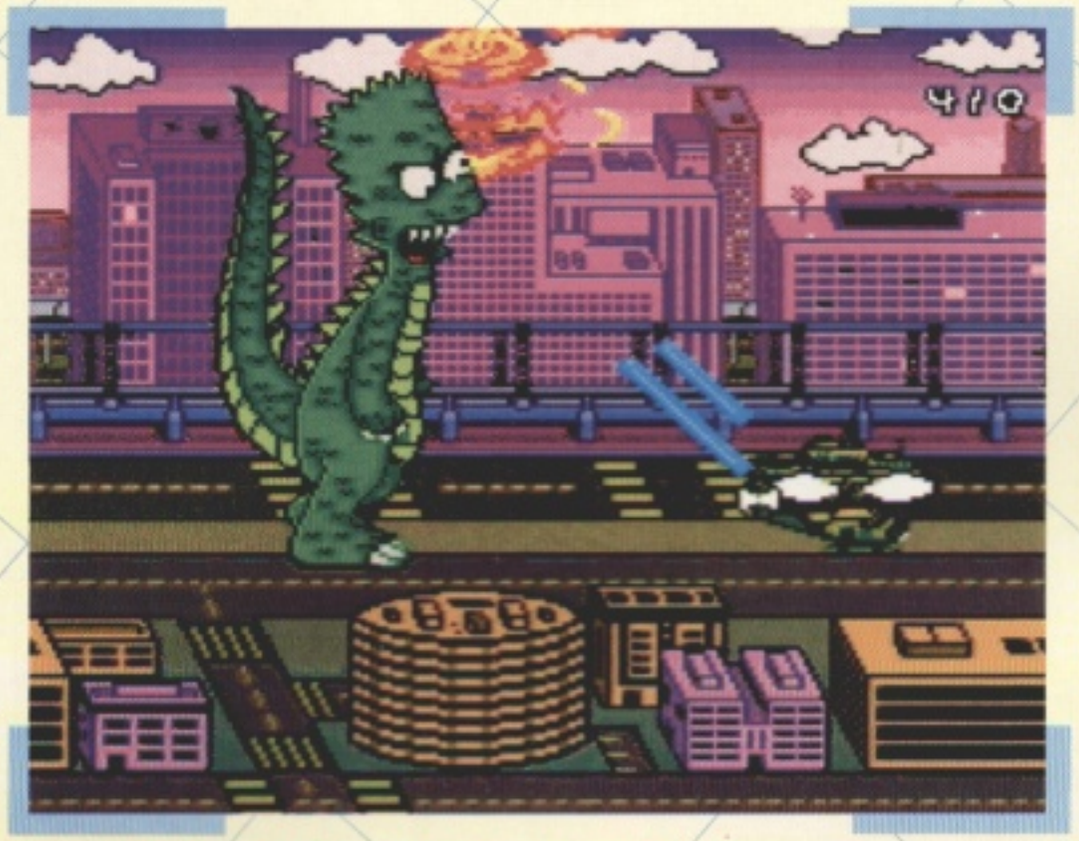
The remaining cat prefers a mallet.

The Attic
Grab the plunger and keep shooting – that's all you can do, really. And make sure you always destroy anyone who's carrying a bazooka.

The Kitchen
Get the mallet and go left, avoiding the death-inducing fireballs as well as Itchy and Scratchy. When you reach the sink, jump up onto it and wait, only leaving to squash either of the dangerous duo. Be careful to avoid the big knives.

STAGE 2: BARTZILLA
(Green door)

As you stomp around the street, get used to the controls, which are strange to say the least. As for getting through the level, it's one of those ones that requires a trial and error approach. You'll simply have to learn when and where enemies appear, so I can't really give you much help.



Bartzilla's on the rampage. Or is it the Jolly Green Giant?

Psychedelic, er, man.

STAGE 3: SCUBA DIVING
(Purple door)

Try not to get distracted by the pretty backdrop – just keep shooting baddies. Remember that some baddies throw bombs (which are hard to spot) and some use their spiky helmets to skewer you. It's worth going for the red baddies first, – they act like a smart bomb when you kill them. Don't forget, too, to collect the little cowboys who shout 'Hi there!'. They free the piece of homework.

You'll soon wipe off that impish smile.

STAGE 4: INDIANA BART
(Orange door)

Keep an eye on the height of the colourful stepping stones in this bit – low stones will drop from beneath your feet. Make full use of your whip to dispose of any threatening enemies. Finally, always try to collect the eggs – you'll soon see why! It's important not to be hasty in leaping all over the place. Plan your route through the level.

It's behind you! Don't miss that egg.

Yes, lava lamps are back.

This one's 'easy' as well, apparently. Keep moving around and firing, Allan reckons, and you'll quickly take the wind out of the flatulent elephant.

He won't hang around for long!

That wasn't so hard, was it? Who says Super Player's Guides are just a lot of hot air?

STAGE 5: BARTMAN
(Blue door)

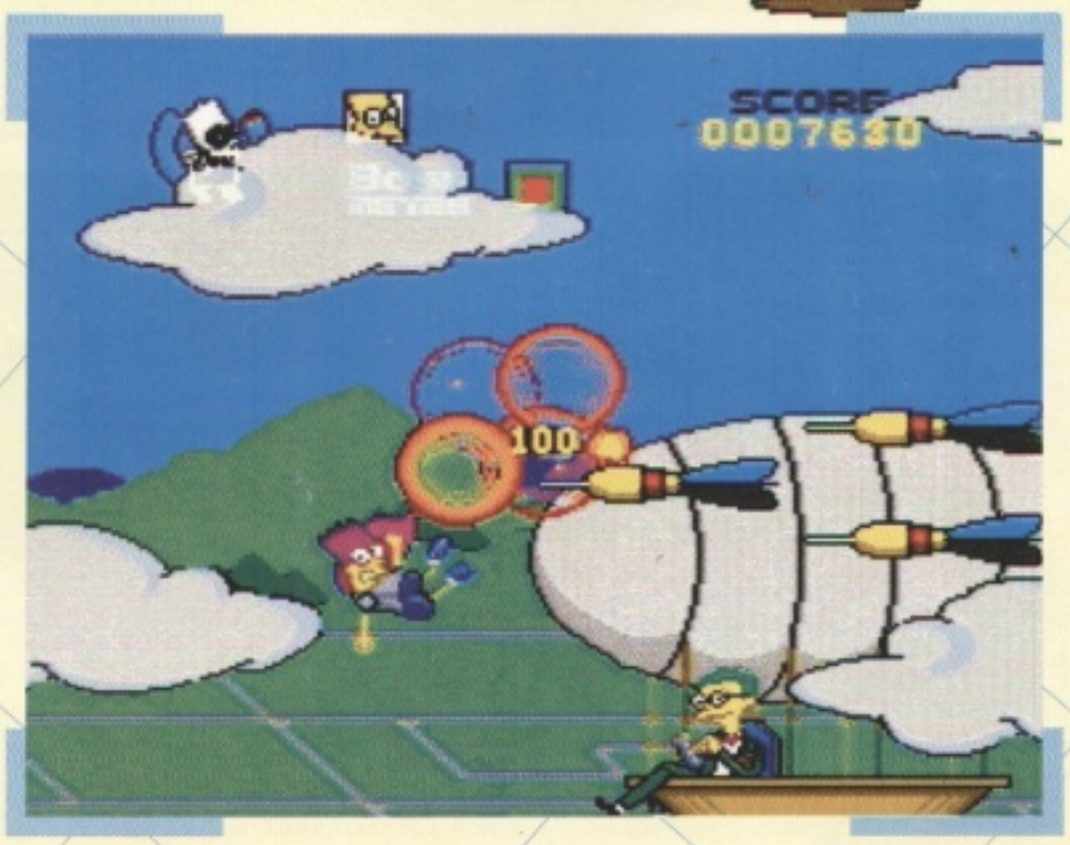
A long, but otherwise pretty straightforward, level. Watch out for the man on the flying carpet, who drops a bottle of extra energy for you to collect. Try to burst all the balloons for some extra goodies, and be very careful when going through the dangerous clouds.

Boss 1
How easy? Just avoid the bombs and occasionally take a few shots. Play it slow but safe.

Boss 2
The flatulent elephant is easy, too. Keep moving and firing and he'll die swiftly.

Boss 3
(This guy reappears later on.)
Concentrate on destroying the darts rather than the Zeppelin, and once they're gone it'll go away.

Final Boss
The plane is hard to kill, as even I must admit. Keep as far away as you can from it and keep moving up and down while firing. Obvious, but it ought to do the trick.



UNCHARTED WATERS

Japanese Release

Game: Uncharted Waters
Publisher: Koei
Price: Approx. £45
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

The ports (this is Lisbon) are only the size of one screen.

Above: A handy map. Right: This chap is there to help.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Re-painting the Sistine Chapel, watching a re-run of the entire series of *Neighbours*, pulling on a smart pair of trousers and going out for a romantic dinner with Gazza – these are just three things I was positive I'd rather be doing than sitting down to review some obscure naval strategy game (with unintelligible Japanese instructions), such as *Uncharted Waters*.

Fortunately, Gazza can go hungry, because, despite my initial anxiety, I had *Unchartered Waters* licked in no time. The plot – to cut a long story short – explains how venturing into 'The uncharted waters' is the only way to save your family from financial ruin. The gameplay involves you sailing between ports, trading goods, equipping and expanding your fleet, and fighting other ships. This is done – in a nutshell – by walking a little *Zelda*-type person around and sailing your ship across a big map.

And that's it. Really. I honestly played it for over two-and-a-half hours, just to make sure. What a load of boloney.

● Rich Pelley

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
47%	23%	38%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	37%
40%		

VERDICT: You'd expect there to be an excruciatingly complex and involving game lurking here somewhere. But could I find it? (Answer: no.)

NBA ALL-STAR CHALLENGE

US Release

Game: NBA All-star Challenge
Publisher: LJN
Price: Approx. £45
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Oops! This free throw looks slightly off centre.

Below: Larry's in charge of the half-time oranges. Right: Jordan and Wilkins clash one-on-one.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

We've seen a fair few basketball games recently, but this is one for the *real* fan – a one-on-one only game, that forces you to rely on your basketball skills alone. This comes in four forms – one-on-one (where two players take turns at attacking the basket); free throw (taking turns to chuck the ball at the net); three point shoot-out (taking four shots at each of five different points around the 'three point line' – the semicircle near the net at each end of the court); 'horse' (you have to equal your opponent's last shot, no matter how far from the net he stood), and one-on-one tournament – the same as the first one, but played in (yes) a tournament.

The more astute amongst you will have guessed that all these games involve only two players (all you ever get to see on court) – making it a fairly specialist taste. You may also have noticed the groovy graphics (check out those reflections!), and will be pleased to hear that it all works as smoothly and clearly as it should, but could be forgiven for wondering if it's not a bit boring. And to be honest, it is – for most of us. Needless to say, however, our resident basketball expert, Jez, loves it.

● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
82%	74%	60%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	59%
58%		

VERDICT: A great looking and smoothly playing basketball game, but, with its 100% commitment to the one-on-one game, it perhaps isn't for everyone.

USHIO AND TORA

Japanese Release

Game: Ushio And Tora
Publisher: Yutaka
Price: Approx. £45
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Choose between playing Ushio or – yes – Tora.

Some of the more horrible things we encountered include flying banshees, a dragon, a knight, a troll, a large banshee, disembodied heads and Esther Rantzen.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

I'm not entirely sure whether or not I like reviewing imported Japanese games. On one hand, indecipherable Japanese text means that the plot and your progress remain a complete mystery. On the other hand (RPGs aside), most Japanese games are pretty easy to suss out. Yet on the other hand (*Hang on, that's three hands – Ed.*), you can't help thinking that maybe you're missing something.

I mean, to me, *Ushio And Tora* seems like a beat-'em-up that consists of nothing more than a chain of end-of-level-baddies. Only some have energy bars, so presumably these are the *real* end-of-level baddies. Apart from that, you wouldn't really know that the game was divided into several different levels at all.

But the really weird bit is that you only ever have two moves (a sort of 'swish' one, and one where you raise your weapon ineffectually into the air). If this was supposed to be a scrolling beat-'em-up then surely there'd be *loads* of moves. And even if it was meant to be a more platform-based *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*-type thing, surely there'd be at least a *few* different ones. This is *extremely* weird.

● Rich Pelley

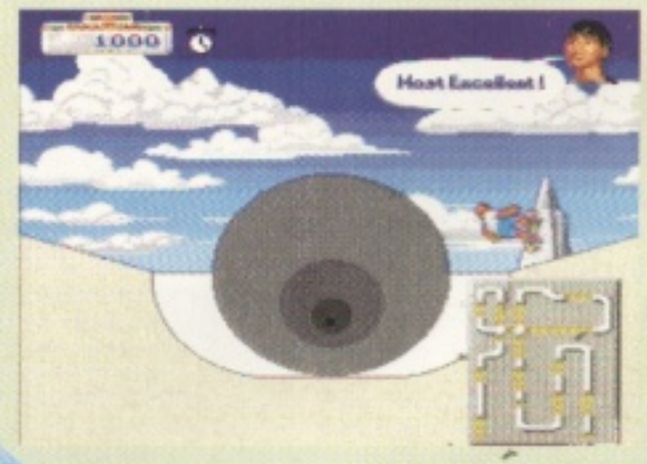
GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
56%	45%	30%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	35%
28%		

VERDICT: A truly dismal game that you could finish on your first go (if you wanted) and isn't worth the chips it's encoded on. Perhaps what's worse is that you're given infinite credits into the bargain.

CALIFORNIA GAMES II

Totally awesome? Totally scary, if you ask us. This silly snowboard ski extreme sequence is funny, but not exactly *good*.

Even the Mode 7 bits are boring. This is the *F-Zero*-style wet-biking sequence – it's pretty enough, but hardly gripping.



Most excellent dude! – NOT. This is urban surfing at its most mindbogglingly boring. Are these *really* Super NES graphics? Is there really so little to do? Is that really a tunnel? The people should be told!

US Release

Game: California Games II
Publisher: DTMC
Price: Approx. £40
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Those who've followed the *Games* series since their original Epyx computer incarnations (*Summer Games*, *Winter Games*, *California Games* etc) will know what to expect of this – a collection of lousy sub games, vaguely depicting a bunch of loosely connected 'sports', lumped together on the same cart. Honestly, if you hate US programming you'll have a field day with this. Let's face it, *California Games II* is crap.

For those who really have to know, the four sub-games in here are a faintly ridiculous hang-gliding affair, an *F-Zero* style wet-bike circuit race, a bit where you're snow-boarding down a ludicrously steep slope, a body-boarding sequence (the big breaker you surf in on has to be the crappest thing ever), and a feeble skateboard section. Assorted 'Dweeb!'s and 'Ay, caramba!'s enliven things a bit, as do the silly ways in which you can fall off your chosen mode of transport, but not much. This is completely irredeemable, basically, but with an honesty about its uselessness that's almost endearing.

● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
30%	13%	23%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	22%
19%		

VERDICT: *California Games II* is an outrageously poor multi-event sport 'sim'. At least it doesn't have the nerve to try and pretend to be something it isn't.

CLUE

US Release

Game: Clue
Publisher: Parker Brothers
Price: Approx. £45
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

This'll be familiar to you... (*Hoi! I was about to use that one – Sue.*) Although the *Cluedo* board you know might be slightly larger than this. And not scroll about quite so much.

Here's Miss Scarlet. How could anyone possibly accuse her of anything – let alone murder?

The evidence suggests that the victim had an unusually pointy-shaped head.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

'Clue'? '*Clue*'? It's CLUEDO, all right? C-L-U-E-D-O – Cluedo. (For pity's sake...) Right, *Cluedo* (as the game is known to the Queen's English-speaking world) is a board game where you've got to guess 'whodunnit' by interrogating the other players and eliminating suspects. Who wins is largely a question of luck, although it's possible to bluff if you're sneaky.

Like *Monopoly*, reviewed below, it's difficult to see why anyone's bothered converting the game to the SNES – except, perhaps, because they could. The only advantages of playing it this way are that you can introduce computer-controlled players, and that cheating is impossible. Oh, and there are some moderately amusing graphical bits. Other than that it's just like playing the board version, except you've got to make all the other players close their eyes when you want to look at your cards.

It's a game that's a bit more fun to play on your own than SNES *Monopoly* but, if you *are* lucky enough to have other people around, proves rather pointless. Forget it and play the 'real' one, which is cheaper.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
65%	60%	40%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	46%
50%		

VERDICT: The usual board game conversion comments apply, really: ie it's a perfectly serviceable conversion that has nothing over the original and costs much more.

MONOPOLY

US Release

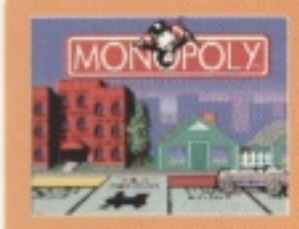
Game: Monopoly
Publisher: Parker Brothers
Price: Approx. £45
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

This'll be familiar to you...

Go to jail, move directly to jail, do not pass Go, do not receive £200. Community Chest and Chance don't change...

The computer automatically pays rent to the person owning the property you land on, which means you can't ever get away without paying by distracting the opposition.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?



My friend Ruth's true colours come out with the *Monopoly* board. All her better qualities go flying out the window and she gets *really* serious and *really* greedy. And what's teeth-grindingly annoying is that she always, always gets Mayfair before anyone else.

As I see it, the whole point of the board game version of *Monopoly* is to cheat as much as possible without being discovered – stealing £500 notes from the bank and nicking the property cards for example. But this is something that's impossible with *Monopoly* on Super NES, and so most of the enjoyment disappears.

As this is the American version of the game, all the old familiar London street names have been replaced by things like Boardwalk and Mediterranean Avenue, so you won't be able to get your A-Z out to find out exactly what you've bought.

On the plus side, you can play against the computer, so you're okay if you haven't got any friends, and it *does* play exactly like *Monopoly* should – you can barter for property etc – but after five minutes I was missing the brawling and arguing that really should accompany the game.

● Sue Grant

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
40%	20%	43%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	40%
35%		

VERDICT: If you get really, really bored on a rainy day, this may just amuse you for about 10 minutes, but only if you haven't already got *Monopoly* the board game.

JEOPARDY

US Release

Game: Jeopardy
Publisher: Gametek
Price: Approx. £45
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

Ooh! Business and industry! Jez's fave!

People with names that're longer than five letters need not apply.

Here's, um... we're not quite sure what he's called, but he's kind of an American version of Bob Monkhouse. And he's got a moustache.

Typing in the answer. Or, rather, the 'question' – this is a very odd game.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Jeopardy is a hugely popular American quiz show. Which is odd, as it's also massively irritating. The whole point of it is that it works backwards – the host supplies the answers, and the contestants guess what the questions are that fit them. But it's not like that at all. The host says something like 'Of California, Canada and Columbia, the one with the fewest people' and the contestant has to reply 'What is Canada?' Look, why not just drop the pretence, and have the host asking: 'Of California, Canada and Columbia, which has the fewest people?' and the contestant answering: 'Canada'? It's nonsense, it really is.

Needless to say, the SNES adaptation is appalling. It does the bare minimum to convert the TV show, without bothering to add any good bits. The result is just a general knowledge quiz of the sort that you'd find in a 99p *Bumper Book Of General Knowledge Questions*. In fact, it's even worse than *Vanna White's Wheel Of Fortune*, rated at 19% in issue 2 – it takes ages to type in the answers, and it hasn't got Vanna White in it.

Of course, you could argue that this sort of thing is designed to be played with friends. But we tried that too, and it was still rubbish.

● Jonathan Davies

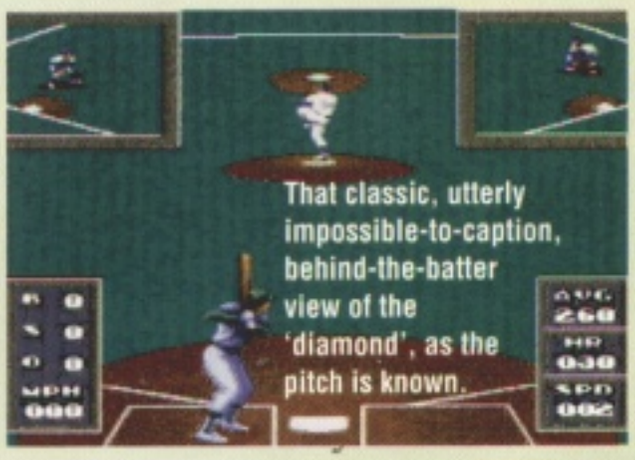
GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
40%	45%	18%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
13%		15%

VERDICT: Very much an American product (you won't understand three quarters of the questions), but still completely nob and a waste of money.

CAL RIPKIN JR BASEBALL

That classic, utterly impossible-to-caption, overhead view of the 'diamond', as the pitch is known.

Here's Cal (or, um, 'Cal' as he's known to his friends). Oddly, his arms seem to be made from baseball bats. We haven't seen his legs.



That classic, utterly impossible-to-caption, behind-the-batter view of the 'diamond', as the pitch is known.

US Release

Game: Cal Ripkin Jr Baseball
Publisher: Mindscape
Price: Approx. £45
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Cal Ripkin Jr? *Jr? (Just get on with it – Ed.)* The trouble with reviewing baseball games (apart from the fact that they hardly ever get over here, and nobody's interested in them anyway) is that they're all much the same. So any review has to be based on tiny things like how good the animation is, if the tunes are okay, any neat touches that have been stuck in, whether or not they've got the right atmosphere and so on. It's all horribly subjective, and a reviewer's nightmare.

Cal Ripken manages fine in the atmosphere stakes, thanks to some groovy Hammond music and nifty animation. It all seems accurate, too. But it falls down in the fielding – it's really difficult to position your fielders in the path of the ball because you can't see them most of the time – and in the pace of the thing. It's all just a bit too slow and boring (and if you don't believe a baseball game could be anything other than slow and boring, check out *Pro League Baseball '93* in the last issue). This is one of the better baseball games, then, but it's not going to win the genre many new friends.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
60%	67%	71%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
70%		70%

VERDICT: A bit slow-moving, and a baseball game, obviously. But otherwise pretty solid, with no obvious flaws. *Pro League '93* is better, though.

NEW TO THE UK

Jonathan Davies provides a brief crib sheet to the major games that we've already reviewed on import, but which are receiving an official UK release this month.

SUPER PANG
Capcom/£49.99/4 Mbit

An absolutely spot-on conversion of the coin-op original – the one where you hop around platforms bursting bubbles – except for one crucial detail: there's no two-player mode. This wouldn't matter, as *Pang* is a perfectly respectable game. It's just that it's a lot more fun with two players. And even if you've never played the original, and are thus ignorant of the pleasures of bubble-bursting as a duo, you'll find the game *does* get boring alarmingly quickly, and is too easy to finish thanks to (you guessed it) an infinite supply of credits. Good, rather than outstanding.

Full review in issue 1.

OVERALL SCORE: 72%

SUPER DOUBLE DRAGON
Technos/£TBA/8 Mbit

Here at *Super Play* we try very hard to like beat-'em-ups. But, apart from the odd exception like *Street Fighter II*, and despite a steady trickle of letters telling us to 'get with it' and 'not to be so silly', we really can't see what the appeal is. In *Super Double Dragon*'s favour are a two-player mode and some nifty animation. But they're struggling against the usual beat-'em-up problem of there not being much to do except walk around hitting people, which quickly gets boring. The sprites are a bit titchy, too, though – as I said – they move nicely. It should perhaps be pointed out that Jez, *Super Play*'s arty person, is absolutely potty about this, although most would see that as another nail in its coffin.

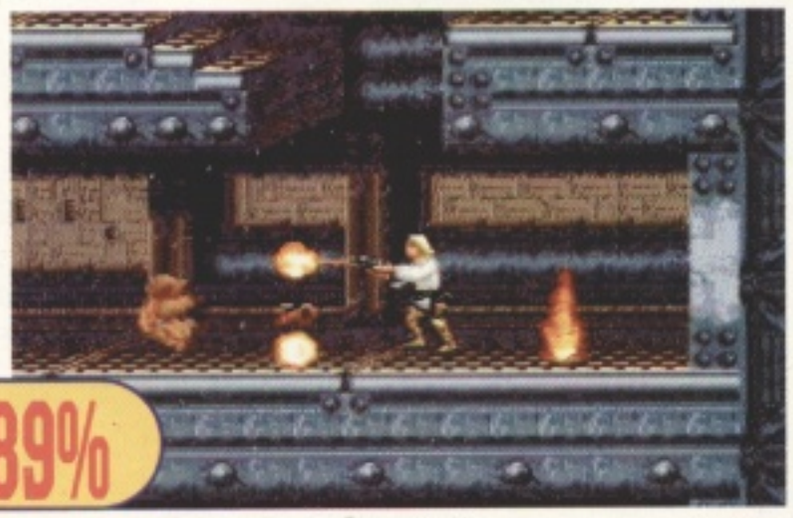
Full review in issue 3.

OVERALL SCORE: 68%

SUPER STAR WARS
JVC/£TBA/8 Mbit

Film licences can be pretty hit or miss affairs, but *Super Star Wars* is almost all 'hit' and very little 'miss'. The game's appeal centres on the way it captures perfectly the feel of the movie – right down to a scorching rendition of the soundtrack. All the characters are there, all the top scenes from the film are featured, the graphics are terrific, but the emphasis is firmly on hopping around platforms and shooting things. (Apart from the crap X-Wing Fighter bits which are best forgotten.) A bit more variety to the action would have sent the mark soaring into, well, who knows? As it is, though, this comes warmly recommended by us.

Full review in issue 4.



OVERALL SCORE: 89%

MAGICAL QUEST STARING MICKEY MOUSE
Capcom/£TBA/8 Mbit

If you're one of those people who keeps writing us letters along the lines of 'I paid forty quid for *Super Mario World* and finished it in a week, it's disgusting, what are you going to do about it?', *Mickey's Magical Quest* isn't the game for you. It's a bit easy to finish, thanks to an unlimited supply of continues. Apart from that, though, it's brill. The graphics are gorgeous – the closest thing to a cartoon yet – and there are hundreds of inventive, original bits. Every level's different, and the bosses are absolutely terrific. Even the music's great. (In fact, Jason half reckons 89% isn't enough.) An out and out classic from the people who brought us *Street Fighter II* and all sorts of other top quality games.

Full review in issue 3

OVERALL SCORE: 89%

BEST OF THE BEST CHAMPIONSHIP KARATE
Loriciel/£TBA/8 Mbit

Although its name might lead you to believe that *Best Of The Best* is a karate game, it's not at all. It's a kick boxing game. And all it basically involves is standing in a boxing ring using combinations of punches and kicks to inflict damage on your opponent. It's been very well done, with lots of (slightly) different moves, and the central boxing bit has been supplemented with a neat training section. It's also got an unusual feature whereby you can choose the moves you're likely to be using most from the large selection available and assign them to the various controller buttons and directions. That's got to be good for half an hour's tinkering about. But the acutely limited nature of the game means it quickly gets extremely boring. If you're in the market for a kick boxing game, this is definitely the one to go for. Otherwise you'd be well advised to take your money elsewhere.

Full review in issue 5.

OVERALL SCORE: 50%

SUPER PLAY SUPERSTORE!

This month we've added two new bargains to Superstore – the QJ TopFighter and the Universal Adaptor. Both gadgets will do wonders for your games playing, so we've pulled a few strings so we can offer them to you at some amazingly low prices. Our other offers are more familiar, but still great – stunning *Akira* videos, Pro Action Replays and, of course, those essential *Super Play* accessories, the T-shirt and the dog-ear defeating *Super Play* binder. Order them all!

DON'T MISS OUT!

SUPER PLAY T-SHIRT

For the more fashion conscious amongst you, we offer these groovy *Super Play* T-shirts – the essential summer fashion item. Team them with blue jeans, shorts or just wear them on their own (!) – they look great whichever. Cheap too.

SUPER PLAY BINDER

Keep your precious issues of *Super Play* in pristine condition – buy a binder! Each one holds 12 issues of *Super Play*, and is probably the most chic-looking magazine holder ever. Or buy two at the same time, and save!

£5.99
2 FOR £10.99

QJ TOPFIGHTER

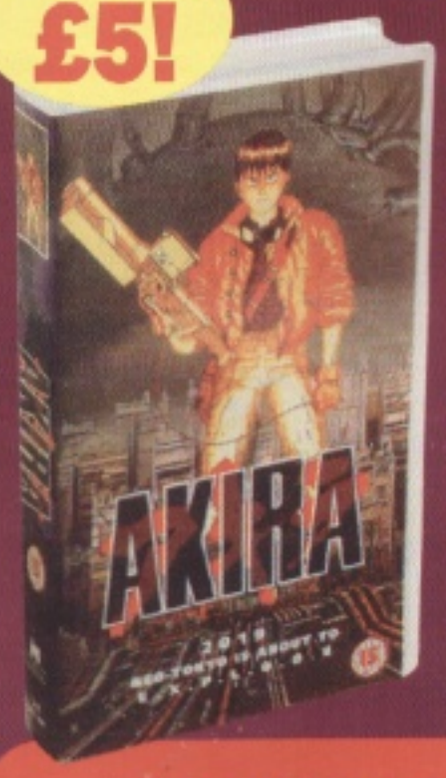
If you're playing *Street Fighter II* without one of these, you're simply not playing *Street Fighter II*. Not properly, anyway. It's absolutely essential, with its tough metal casing, steel shaft, arcade-style buttons, rapid fire and slow motion. It can be programmed with up to three combos too. In short, it's the business!

£64.99

UNIVERSAL ADAPTOR

Buy one of these and you can play all the latest US and Jap carts on a UK Super NES (and, for that matter, UK carts on Jap or US machines). And for only...

£16.99



AKIRA VIDEO

What more can we say to convince you to buy a copy of this visually stunning, action packed, full-length Japanese feature film rendered in top quality Japanese anime. (*I think that'll do it – Ed.*) An absolute bargain at only...

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PRO ACTION REPLAY

Cheat at games! Enter special codes into an Action Replay and you'll be able to give yourself infinite lives, invincibility or extra weapons that you'd normally take ages to acquire. You can use codes printed in *Super Play*, or make up your own with the Trainer mode that Datel have included. A bargain at...

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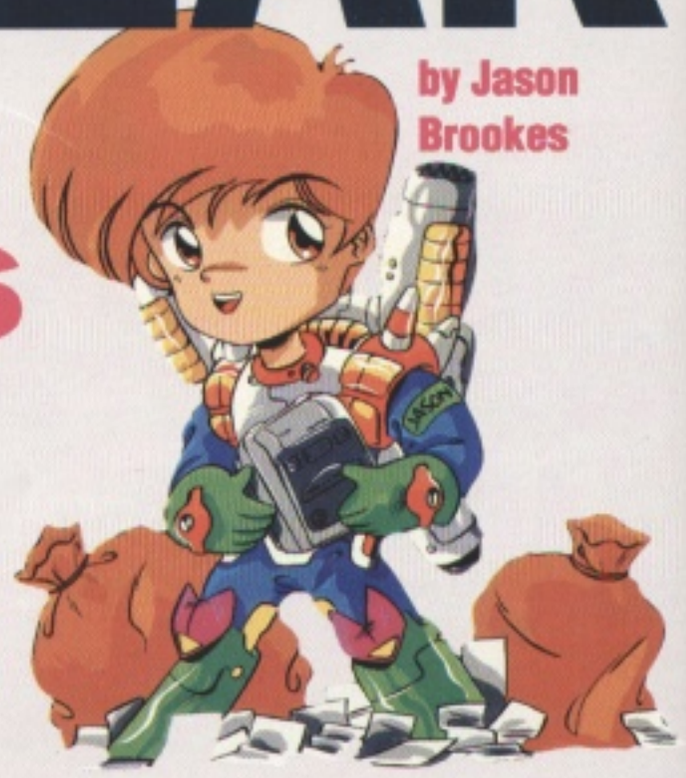
GAMEFREAK

SNES TECH & GAMING ANSWERS

by Jason Brookes



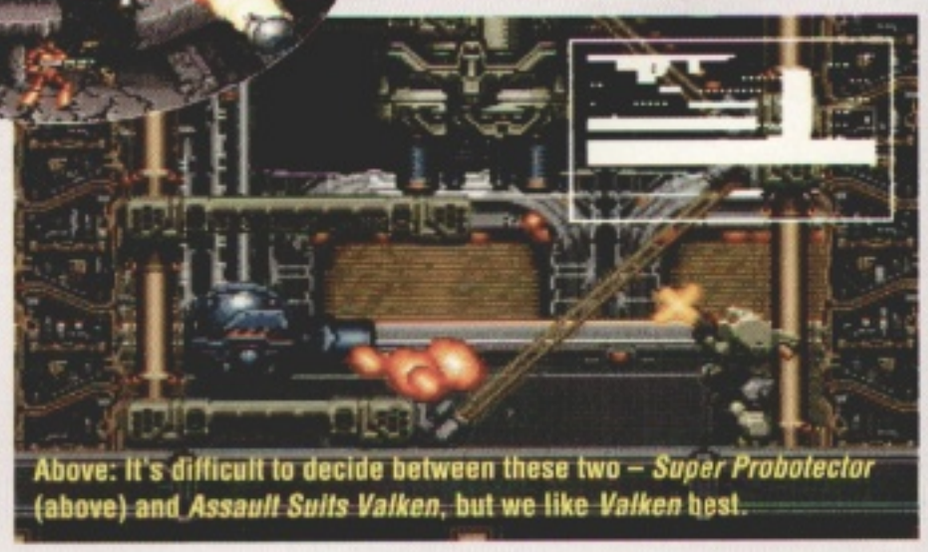
He's young, uninhibited and fancy free... it's the Gamefreak! Regularly seen at parties answering people's PAL and SCART questions, Gamefreak is *Super Play*'s very own tower of gaming knowledge. Go on, put him to the test and let him solve your problems. You'll feel so much better for it.

DEAR GAMEFREAK,
1) Could you pass on my compliments to Wil Overton for his brilliant cover illustrations – any chance he'd do a portrait of me if I sent a photo?
2) When is *Sleepwalker* from Ocean due for release?
3) How much will *Sleepwalker* cost, taking into account that £5 will be sent to Comic Relief?
4) When is *Starfox* due for release in the UK?
5) In *Super Play* 5 you had a small section on *Super Mario Kart* fastest laps. Will you be running a small column for this?
6) Has the Game Genie been released for the UK SNES yet? How much will it be?
7) Do the Zydec speakers enable you to listen to the *King Arthur's World* soundtrack in true Dolby Stereo?
8) After reading all your tips for *Super Star Wars*, I have been in doubt as to whether I should buy this game, because it makes it sound a doddle to finish with 99 lives. Is this so?
Craig Cacchioli, Suffolk.

1) Only if you've got enormous eyes and spiky blonde hair.
2) It's due in the fourth quarter this year.
3) There's no price set yet.
4) Early May.

Incidentally, our version of *Starfox* doesn't work on UK machines – the cart has extra pins on the board which current adaptors aren't designed to access. If, like the majority of people, you own a UK Super NES, don't be tempted to buy an import copy of the game.
5) Yes, check out Super Express this issue. If you fancy putting your best karting times up against the pros, send in your best times for Mario Circuit 1 (one-player mode), including details of the character you used.
6) It's coming out in late April for around £40-45.
7) No, you'd need special equipment and *four* speakers.
8) Tips aren't compulsory, you know – you could try playing it properly. We actually think the game *does* have a decent amount of gameplay.

DEAR GAMEFREAK,
1) I have *Super Mario Kart* (PAL version) and I have tried to beat your *Mario Kart* times – but can't! (*What do you expect, son? We're professionals – GF.*) I was wondering if it has anything to do with my UK console being 17% slower than import models?
2) Which is better: *Super Probotector* or *Assault Suits Valken* (*Cybernator*)?
3) I already have *Super Tennis*, so is it really worth me buying a Super



Above: It's difficult to decide between these two – *Super Probotector* (above) and *Assault Suits Valken*, but we like *Valken* best.

The imminent Superdeck system adaptor from Hornby.

DEAR GAMEFREAK,
1) On *Bad Influence!* they said that there would be an adaptor to enable you to play 8-bit NES games on the Super NES. As I have a US Super NES, I would like to know if it will work on my machine, and will I be able to use both UK and US 8-bit NES carts?
2) A word to all would-be console football fans out there – a lot of games take time to get used to, and *Super Cup Soccer* actually plays a very good game of football. You can do some lovely curve shots, and the computer goalie is not impossible to beat. My advice is to give it a try before playing *Super Soccer*.
Chris Appleby, Middlesex.

1) There are two versions of the Superdeck planned. The UK version (see Super Express last issue) is due in the UK in late June for £29.99. It has four slots to allow UK SNES games, imported Super NES games (Japanese and US), UK NES games and US NES games to all work on a standard UK SNES. We're not sure whether you'll be able to use a UK Superdeck with a US SNES, though – because US NES games don't work on the UK NES without an adaptor. We'll keep you posted on this.

The second version of the Superdeck will be released in the States, just for the US machine. That version has two slots to allow just US SNES games and US NES games to work on it. We'll give both versions of the Superdeck a full test as soon as we get our hands on them.
2) Yeah, *Super Cup Soccer* (or *Super Goal*, as it's now known on US import) certainly has its fans (see pic left). We'll give it another look when it arrives for the UK Super Nintendo soon.

STUCK OR STUFFED?

Then you need the Gamefreak! He'll do his very best to answer any Super Nintendo-type questions you may have for him. All you need to do is write to the guy at this address: Gamefreak, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Try and avoid the most-commonly-asked questions outlined elsewhere on this page, and we'll do our best to answer you as soon as possible.

Multitap and *Jimmy Connor's Pro Tennis Tour*?
4) Should I buy *Star Wars*, as I already have *Super Probotector*?
Adam Coates, Dorking.

1) It shouldn't make any difference – the SNES doesn't use seconds as such – but programmed time intervals. In real-time it takes longer to go round the courses on the UK machine, but the intervals are correspondingly longer, and so the times end up the same as on an import machine. We've played the Jap version of *Mario Kart* through an adaptor on the UK SNES, and the times we got are the same as those obtained on an import machine. We *have* got a copy of the UK version, and I suspect the story will be the same there – I just couldn't find it to check!
2) Both games are fab, but *Valken* is my fave because the gameplay is more varied. *Super Probotector* has the edge sonically and graphically, though.
3) It depends how often you're likely to play with a bunch of friends – and how loaded you are too!
4) *Star Wars* isn't quite as impressive as *Super Probotector*, but it's still huge and challenging.

DEAR GAMEFREAK.
Concerning the much talked about screen borders on PAL machines, I wonder if you can sort out my problem. I own a Japanese Super Famicom and I run it on a Toshiba FST NICAM stereo 21 inch TV with a SCART port, so I can really appreciate my machine to the full.

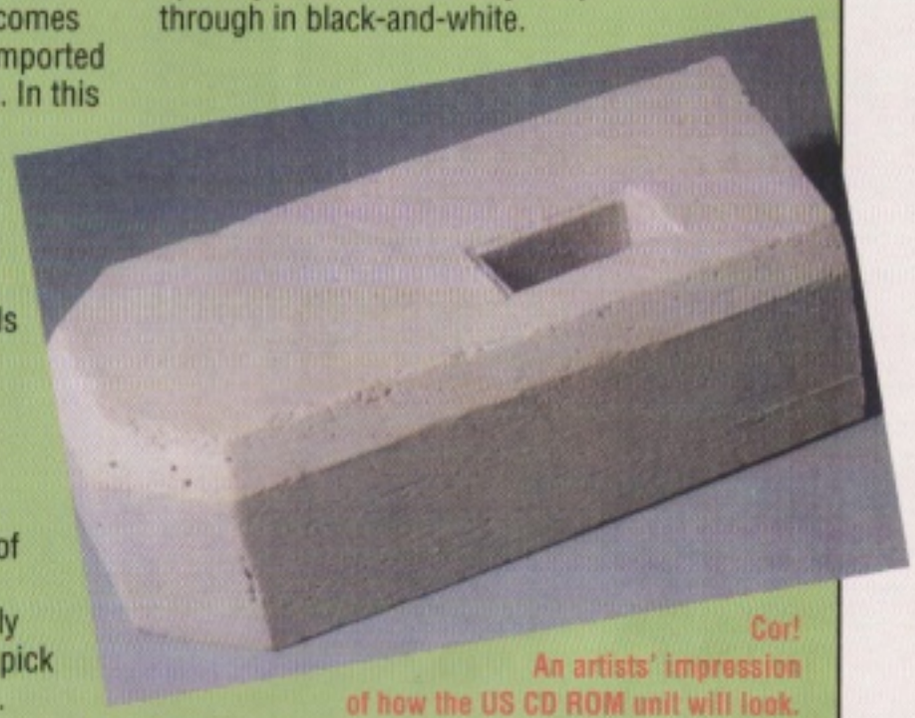
However, after reading about screen borders and speed differences etc, I noticed that I have borders at the top and bottom of my picture, so I borrowed a friend's British PAL SNES and compared the two. To my surprise the picture was actually bigger on his machine than on mine (using *SFII* and *Super Mario World* as good examples). Now, is this a fault of my Nintendo, or my TV? Luckily it's not all bad news, though – my set-up still runs faster and has a clearer picture. Still, I hope you can help me, as I'm getting a little bit worried.
S. Eason, Middlesex.

I covered all this back in issue 3, but here's a recap. Some SCART televisions only allow a narrow picture to be displayed with imported SCART consoles. Apparently it's because the TV doesn't have the necessary circuitry to cope with the full-screen image. As for the picture being narrower than a 50 Hz UK PAL display, I'm very surprised. If you only use the TV for the Super Nintendo, then you could get the picture vertically stretched by a TV technician as detailed in issues 4 and 6. This distorts the standard TV picture though, so a switch needs to be fitted to change between the two.

DEAR GAMEFREAK,
1) In an advert in your mag I noticed there were speakers available for the SNES. I have an American SNES and I cannot see anywhere to plug these into. How can you hook them up?
2) I've subscribed to your mag and have read all of your reviews which are very good. But I can't decide between *Cybernator*, *Super Star Wars* and *Contra 3*. What do you think?
3) I am eagerly awaiting news of the SNES CD, but I have only seen pictures of it with the Super Famicom. I was wondering what the US version will look like, because of the different shape of the machine?
4) Will the SNES CD play music CDs?
5) How much will the US version cost, and when will it appear?
6) Finally, is it possible to plug a US SNES into a video SCART socket, and then from the video into a PAL TV?
David Parsons, Wiltshire.

1) Stereo sound is outputted through the multi-out at the back of the SNES – a twin phono lead will plug into this and then plug straight into a Hi-Fi or ghetto blaster with phono line-in sockets. However, if your SCART lead comes out of this socket (as it does on most imported US machines), this presents a problem. In this case it's possible to have phono leads branched off the SCART lead – one of our US machines has this set-up hooked up to a stereo, giving our games brilliant stereo sound.

US machines that have SCART leads wired internally obviously have an advantage in that the multi-out is left free. I'm not aware of any multi-out adaptors that allow two leads to be plugged in together. TDS Trading in London can help you to get stereo out of your Super NES. Tel: (081) 677 5113.
2) They all play extremely well – the only real recommendation we can give is to pick the theme that appeals to you the most.
3) The US machine is undeniably a sexy piece of kit, and naturally the CD ROM unit is shaping up nicely too. Check out the prototype pic (below) that our Nintendo newshound uncovered!
4) It's unlikely the unit will be able to play standard music CDs, because the hardware is being designed to read specially encased CDs only. There won't be a draw that slides out as on most CD players, because Nintendo reckon such a feature would be prone to damage – instead, specially encased CDs will slot into the unit in the same way that a video does in a VCR.
5) The US version will cost around $200 (£150ish), and will probably appear shortly after the Jap one. The factor that will most influence the US release date is the range of software available. While the Jap market will tolerate just a couple of decent games with a new system, the US market needs a much wider range to choose from. However, I can't imagine Nintendo hanging around for too long – Sega has already entered the CD arena in the US with the launch of the Mega CD (called the Sega CD over there) before Christmas last year, and Nintendo must be feeling the need to catch up.
7) Yes you can, but usually the picture comes through in black-and-white.



Cor! An artists' impression of how the US CD ROM unit will look.

DEAR GAMEFREAK,
In issue 5 I was looking down your Datebook list and I noticed that Electronic Arts have got two American football games that are due to be released soon (*Madden '93* and *Pro Football '93*). If these are not the same games under different titles, which one looks the best? Also I noticed a game called *Football Fury* – is this the Neo Geo game recently featured on *GamesMaster*?
Martin Hancon, Liverpool.

Pro Football is the Japanese name for *John Madden* football – it's the same game. *Football Fury* is actually the American version of the Japanese title *Ultimate Football* by Sammy. And no, we don't know why it's called that – it's not all that furious, as far as we can tell.

Sammy's *Ultimate Football*, aka *Football Fury* in the States

THE GAMEFREAK TOP TEN

These are the most over-asked questions! Steer well clear of them if you want to see your name in print...

Q Can you control the bosses on *SFII*?
A Not without a Game Genie cart.
Q Who is this Ed thing?
A (*Eh? – Ed.*)
Q When will the CD ROM be released?
A Late this year or next year in Japan and the States. It'll definitely be '94 here.
Q Is *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition* coming out on the SNES?
A Capcom are saying no at the moment.
Q Oh come on, it must be?
A Flipping heck.
Q Is *Blockbusters* due out on the SNES?
A Get out of here!
Q Can I get rid of borders on my UK SNES?
A Yes. Stretch the picture with a vertical size adjustment on the TV or monitor, or getting the console coverted to 60 Hz by a specialist company.
Q How do I get a job like yours?
A Get a decent education and don't play too many video games.
Q Will there be another WWF wrestling game for the SNES?
A Yes, later in the year.
Q Is Matt Bielby really a pro games player?
A In a very loose sense.

MODE 7

CALLING ALL CHEATS, CRACKERS, AND GAME FREAKS!

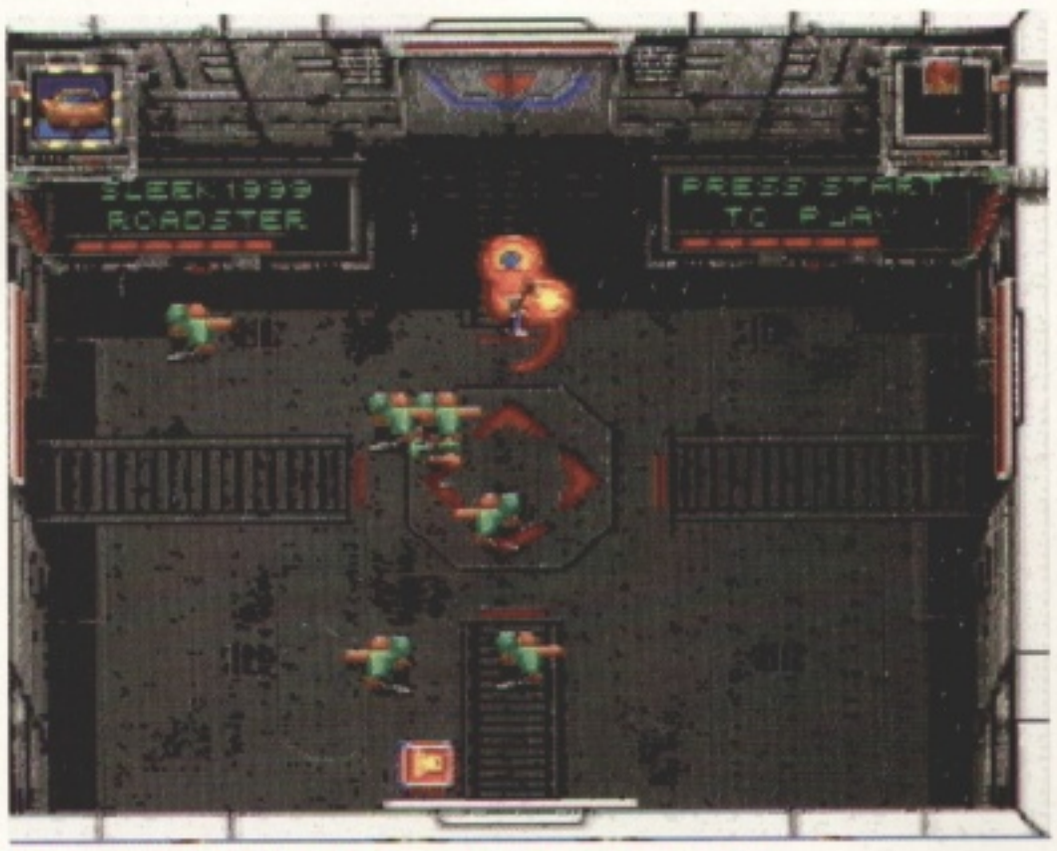
Back with a vengeance, it's popular synth-pop group Depeche Mode, only without the depeche, and (er) with a seven on the end. Wow! That makes these pages, um, Mode 7. For those who don't know, it's the part of the mag where you do your bit for the gameplaying section of humanity by helping each other out with hints, tips and cheats. It's also the bit where we bung in a few of our favourites ourselves – sort of our very own monthly charity event really.

Of course, to keep things flowing properly we need your input. Send your best, newest codes and cheats to the office here at Mode 7, *Super Play*, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW and you *may* find yourself the proud owner of a *Super Play* pen or even (whoo!) a *Super Play* T-shirt. There's really no excuse for not joining in.

SUPER SMASH TV

(Acclaim)

If you're fed up of slaughtering masses of bat-wielding bad guys and want a *real* challenge, then go to the player/skill selection screen and press LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, UP, R, R and you should hear the gameshow host say 'Bingo!' When you choose the option you want and start the game, everything will be in fast action, making just staying alive a real problem. Also, when you get to the level with the electrified orbs, if you stay in the bottom left-hand corner and fire from there, nothing can get to you.



Fast and furious fighting in *Super Smash TV*, using our hot tip.

THE ADDAMS FAMILY

(Ocean)

Typing in the code B&1&B will give you five hearts, 80 lives and will start you off with Granny and Pugsley already safe, so the job of saving your family has practically been done for you. Also, typing in W111W gives you 100 lives, four hearts and a sword, while 71117 gets you started with a mere 100 lives, three hearts and a sword (just in case you don't need quite so much help.)

Just how much more help could you possibly need to complete this one? Answers on a postcard to the usual address please...

Oh no! If I could only get this little blue man off my nose...

ASK ADE

INVALUABLE MONTHLY GAMING ADVICE

Guess what the most popular question's been this month? (And not just to Ask Ade, but to every other department of *Super Play* too.) Yes: 'Can you play the four bosses in *Street Fighter II*?' The answer is, of course, no – except that with a Game Genie you can half do it. Here's how: Put in the codes 10A4-0767 plus F0AE-6D04, then go to Vs mode. Have both controllers plugged in, choose Ryu and Ken, and press START on both controllers. This'll give you the normal stage selection screen. Player 1 selects the area of the boss you want to play as. You will then go to that screen, and the second player will be able to play as the boss of that stage – you can do many, but perhaps not all, that boss's moves.

Now that's out of the way, on with your other problems...

ONES I CAN DO

● Dear Ade
I have completed 91 levels in *SMB IV*, but can't find the last five. Please list the most missed levels in the game. And does after killing Bowser count as a level?
David Tems, Bury.

● Everyone takes different routes through the game, and finding the 'most missed' levels would not only be impossible – it would take up too much space here. And no, killing Bowser doesn't count.

● Dear Ade
I can't beat my older brother at *Super WWF*. Have you any cheats or tips?
Ben Cole, Harold Wood.

● How about kicking him in the leg, and then Double Supplex him or something? The only real hint is just to keep hitting the buttons faster than he does.

● Dear Ade
I have *Castlevania IV*, and am stuck on level six. Any ideas??
Josh White, Australia.

● Yep, see the pic above right for the password to get you onto level seven.

● Dear Ade
I have seen *Super Probotector* in other mags, and they all have a human instead of a robot. Please could you tell me how to do this?
Oliver Yates, Lichfield.

● You'll have to buy the US or Jap version – *Contra III* or *Contra Spirits* respectively. The UK version is the same game, but has the robot sprite instead of the soldiers.

● Dear Ade
In *Legend Of Zelda* I can't kill the masked guardian in the Palace of Darkness. Can you help?
Daniel Scarlett, Leeds.

F1 EXHAUST HEAT

(Ocean)

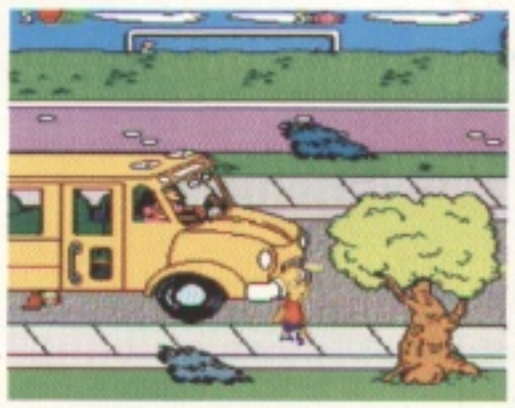
There's a hidden track within the Monaco circuit, which has been found by a nameless writer from Cumbria. (Come on people, at least make an effort to be friendly to us. We're all pals here, you know.) Anyway, at the bottom of the Monaco track, just as you come out of the bend and are heading for the straight, you'll find a series of triangles sticking out from the side. If you drive between the third and fourth of these triangles, directly into the base of the 'V' they form, you should be able to drive straight through and end up on the hidden track.

It looks like this guy's totally off course and in for a splashing time, but no! He's just about to discover a secret track.

BART'S NIGHTMARE

(Acclaim)

On the Itchy and Scratchy level, you can get an extra life by shooting the exploding light bulbs with the fire extinguisher. Lewis Pinder from Ipswich sent us that one. Thanks, Lewis.



Bart's missed the bus again.

SUPER MARIO IV

(Nintendo)

James Earl from Farnham has found a way of getting up to 40 extra lives at a time. To use his method, you must first have completed Vanilla Secret 2. Enter the level, preferably at the half-way mark, and don't kill any of the Koopas unless you really have to. Make your way to the row of Spinies, and in the brick second from the left, you'll find a silver P-block. Carry this back to half-way point, near the jumping plants, then activate the block and run straight to the left. You should now find that all the Koopas have turned into silver coins, and that after you've collected 10 coins, any more will give you 3 Ups.

ASSAULT SUITS VALKEN

(NCS Masiya)

On the title screen, hold UP, R and L and press START to activate the cheat mode. Then you can select 'free play' to get infinite continues.

Assault for sore eyes!

SUPER R-TYPE

(Irem)

There's a level select screen for this notoriously difficult shoot-'em-up – at least, Peter Anderson from Newcastle says so. On the second title screen, press the R button nine times and then UP nine times before pressing START. Pause the game and then press A, R and SELECT.

This isn't a picture of the level select screen, but it *is Super R-Type*.

SUPER MARIO KART

(Nintendo)

Mode 7 would seem empty without at least one *Mario Kart* cheat, wouldn't it? This month's comes from Michael Sullivan from Solihull. On Choco Island 2, get a feather, and when you pass the finish line, immediately turn and jump over the barrier on the right. Once you've done this, just drive back to the finish line, and you'll have missed out an entire lap. If you can't then win with an entire lap's advantage, you're a very sad case indeed.

● Dear Ade
On *Legend Of Zelda* I can't kill the Helemasaur King in the Palace of Darkness. Please tell me how to beat him.
Brooke Nimmo (no address supplied).

● Apart from repeatedly hitting his mask until it's broken, there isn't much I can say. Use arrows on him once the mask is off.

ONES I CAN'T DO

● Dear Ade
I have *Final Fantasy: Mystic Quest*, but can't get past the Falls Basin. Phoebe says 'Let's move this ice block', but nothing happens when we do. Can you help me?
Thomas Kershaw, Sussex.

● Dear Ade
I've been playing the game *Final Fantasy: Mystic Quest*, and I'm stuck in the Focas Tower. I have the sky coin. I also can't get to the Ship Clock to reach Mac's ship – I've flooded the lake. Can you help?
David Reid, Falkirk.

● Sorry, guys. I haven't played the game enough to know the answer. Any takers?

● Dear Ade
I've tried to do the last level on *Lemmings* Sunsoft level, but I can't do it. Can you help me please?
Andrew Squarce, Tavistock.

● I can't, but I've a sneaking suspicion that someone out there can.

ONES YOU'VE DONE FOR ME!

● David Walker of Glasgow reckons that if you press DOWN, RIGHT, DOWN, DOWN, RIGHT, RIGHT and START, on *Super Probotector*, then you'll get 50 extra lives. And you can get a level select by pressing LEFT, DOWN, DOWN-LEFT, LEFT and START. That should help quite a few of you out. Cheers, Dave.

● James McGachie of Edinburgh has the key, literally, to getting into the pleasure domes in *Super Smash TV*. Go to the option screen and press RIGHT, RIGHT, UP, DOWN, R button, L button. You'll now be given a stage select screen.

● Jason Bell from St Helier has the solution for Darren Bamford of Nottingham who was stuck on the seventh level of *Soul Blazer* (from *Super Play* issue 5).

1. First go to the bottom left-hand corner of the screen and speak to the person who has a Harp String but who won't move. He will tell you that his friend who gave him the Harp String has been taken prisoner and taken to the Torture Room in the first Basement/Dungeon, and hasn't been seen since. Now, as all the lairs are sealed, and you haven't released him, he must be dead. So, if you go into the Torture Room and up to the top right-hand corner, you'll see a skeleton you can try and talk to. On the left you will find the Harp String.
2. Go back to the town and into the house in the bottom left-hand corner where the musician with the broken Harp String is on the stage. Give him the String and he will thank you and start to play. There are two guards in the house, one who's there for a rest. When the musician starts to play he will move to the stage so he can hear more clearly. As he does so he'll step off the platinum card which you can now pick up, and use to go into the Tower on the top left -hand side of the screen. Easy, eh?

Cheers, Jason. There were quite a few others with the solution, but Jason's was by far the clearest and most accurate description.

Barry Ashdown of Surrey says that if, when you put in the *Prince Of Persia* cheat, you hold down B and Y and then press all of the other buttons, the X button will become a Smart Bomb and kill your opponents. Nice.

That's quite enough questions and answers for one month, I think. Don't forget, though – I'll need lots more for next month. So write without delay to: Ask Ade, *Super Play*, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

ACTION REPLAY CODES

As always, we've been flooded with codes for all manner of games. You'll need a Pro Action Replay cartridge before these codes are of any use to you, and if you haven't already got one then don't worry. Just check out Superstore on page 77 for details of how to get hold of one.

DRAGON'S LAIR
7E0F F903 Unlimited shields
7E0F EB02 Unlimited lives
7E0FF605 Infinite time

LETHAL WEAPON (US)
7E02 2606 Unlimited lives
7E02 2203 Unlimited ammo

Q*BERT 3 (US)
7E05 8205 Unlimited lives

SUPER ALESTE
7E01 5702 Unlimited lives
7E01 5203 Unlimited smart weapons

SPIDERMAN & THE X-MEN
7E01 0003 Unlimited lives

TMNT IV (Jap)
7E00 9661 Infinite time on the Vs mode

SUPER SMASH TV
7E189906 Keep your weapon until you pick up another

JAKI CRUSH PINBALL
7E1C 6202 Infinite balls
7E00 7800 Invisible enemies

SUPER STAR WARS
7E098500 Blaster
7E098501 Flame
7E098502 Seeker
7E098503 Rapid Ion
7E098504 Plasma

Thanks and (just maybe) some *Super Play* pens to Peter Anderson of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Conrad Moulsney of Reading and all the boys from Universal Consoles And Games for their help.

PRINCE OF PERSIA

(NCS)

We've got two lots of codes for this one, one for the US version and one for the European one, so no one need feel left out. Our thanks go out to David Walsh from Northfield for the home team effort, and Kirk Truscott from Jersey for the American codes. Look out for the postie with your pens.

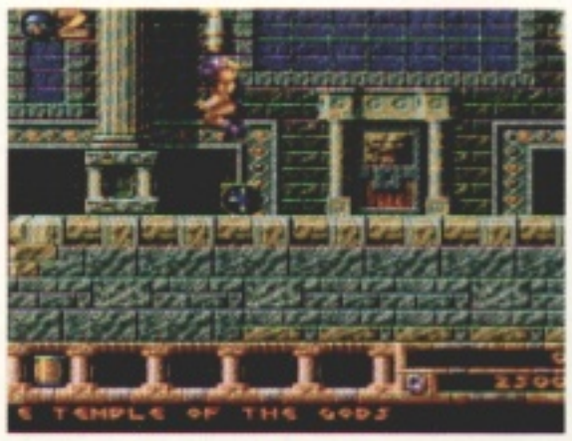
Now, I don't think you wanted to do that...

UK Version		US Version	
9LJQT9B	M656D8X	M8QN+2X	CXJCL97
L4BLWNN	TJZ6T2!	TPLBWNN	B7PV3X!
9HB5LDX	ZRMFLDV	9H3BBD4	CNKPDJ7
T7XB3VB	75MXW77	3Q55LVR	34P8++!
VGP+LZ2	ZMP!3+J	V5M5D62	4CV!+Y7
LH4BL+X	7W7R556	T4M5WTB	Y+L3FHD
VKX3T5G	4T7+2PV	VK21D52	43WT53L
LY5KLP9	75NB98	3NDH33X	Y!TYSK!
M7GXLWR	4557CLS	9JL8BIR	ZFGW!V5
TKQZWFG		36B6L8G	

GODS

(Bitmap Brothers)

In a rush to finish *Gods*? Kirk Sanderson from Merseyside already has. Here are the codes to Bitmap's latest creation.
TEMPLE: SD1
LABYRINTH: MGB
UNDERWORLD: BMH



Make your life easier, use our codes.

SONIC BLAST MAN

(Taito)

Probably the best bits of this (fairly run-of-the-mill) beat-'em-up are the special between-level punching bonus rounds – and now you can play them on their own, without having to bother with the rest of the game. Simply do this: on the option screen, move to music select and select 10 HIT. Now hold down the SELECT button, press L, R, R, L and START, and you're away.

JAKI CRUSH PINBALL

(Naxat)

It's pretty hard to mention *Jaki Crush Pinball* without using an inevitable oo-er line, but we'll resist the temptation. These codes give you masses of balls (not a word, from any of you) and were sent to us by W Wong from Stockport, who was honest enough to admit seeing them in a Japanese magazine. We admire your honesty, so here – have a *Super Play* pen.

4444444Y – 33 Balls
55555555 – 21 Balls
6666666C – 42 Balls
8888888S – 84 Balls
CCCCCCS – 8 Balls
KKKKKKKS – 10 Balls

These evil faces turn a lot nastier if you hit them enough.

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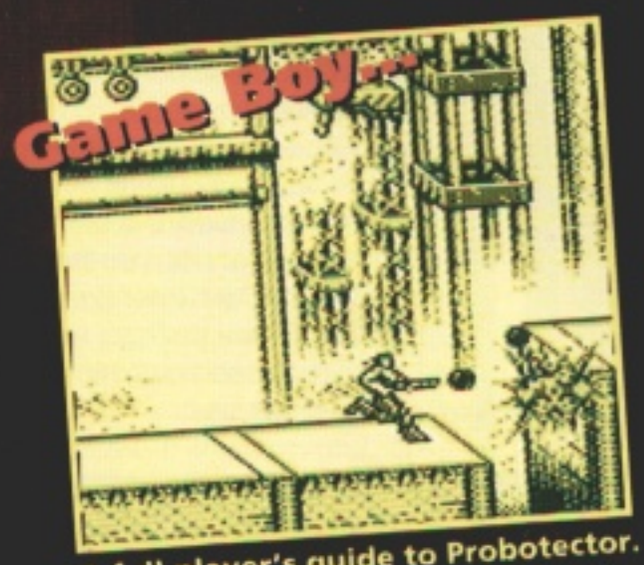
- Super NES
- Game Boy
- NES

Like the look of this lot?

StarFox – a stunning 3D shooter!

Pugsley goes scavenging in Addams 2.



A full player's guide to Probotector.

Bucky O'Hare battles toads on NES.

Then get this!

The latest issue of Britain's best Nintendo magazine is now on sale. It has tips, previews and reviews of all the big new games for Super NES, NES and Game Boy. And it's got a massive poster too! All this for just £2.25!

PLAY BACK

HYPER EXCITING READER'S VOICE

This month: the inevitable *World In Action* backlash; some similarly inevitable stuff about CD-ROM; epilepsy; a dog called Benjy; anime is childish; someone who reckons *Mario World* and *Zelda* aren't any good; and your *Mario Kart* times. It's well worth a read (or, indeed, a write).

'A DOG CALLED BENJY'

I'm a proud owner of a Super Nintendo. I also have the most excellent game *Super Mario Kart*. I've also got a dog called Benjy, and he's about one-year-old now.

Well anyway, when I turn up the volume at the beginning of *Mario Kart* my dog (Benjy) starts howling. However, he doesn't do it with any other game. I would like to know if this happens to your dog (if you've got one) or any of your friends' dogs.

Yours,
Massoud Kish, Richmond.

'WE ARE HERE'

On reading your superb magazine, my girlfriend noticed you did not know who a couple of the *Tiny Toon* characters were. Well, we are here to tell you who they are: Elmyra is related to Elma Fudd, the pig who tries to shoot Bugs Bunny; and Shirley The Loon's related to Daisy Duck, Donald Duck's girlfriend. I hope that helps you a bit.

Yours,
Ray Jones, Exmouth.

'HE PRETENDED TO SHOOT A FRIEND'

I am writing to tell you how appalled I was at the recent episode of *World In Action* that was about video games and their effects on children.

Throughout the week the programme was advertised on ITV with the words 'Welcome to the danger zone' – which sounds like an introduction to a horror movie. Things were not looking good.

I sat in front of my TV, then, with bated breath, in the hope that the programme would be open-minded. However, with the first few sentences my hopes were dashed. They seemed to look upon the term 'kiddy cocaine' rather favourably, rather than seeing it as hyped-up journalism.

I wonder if I was the only one who noticed that they had no children who appeared to be over the age of 12 on the show at all, those giving explanations of games looked even younger. They showed one child comparing his console with his teddy bear! Others were describing methods of attack in games such as *Streets Of Rage* and *Final Fight*, and obviously getting much enjoyment out of seeing the looks of disgust on the adults faces as they made the effects of these moves sound as horrific as possible.

A professor of psychology at Manchester University says that video games make children more aggressive in certain social situations. Surely he played with toy guns as a child – is *he* very aggressive because he pretended to shoot a friend? No he isn't, and neither are we just because we control a video character (a non-real person) that supposedly shoots a laser gun (a non-real weapon) at another video character (another non-real person).

Yours,
Andrew Burgress, Stalybridge.

Exactly right, Andrew. The guys on *World In Action* were talking about *Street Fighter II* and so on like any kids do in a playground, relishing the blood and guts of it all, which no doubt sounds horrific to some parents – but is actually no different from the way I used to talk about comics or horror films or whatever at the same age, and no doubt you did (and those very same parents did) too. I suspect that computer and video games are no more innocent or guilty than any other popular entertainment medium as far as 'corrupting our kids' is concerned, the real problem for us being that there's a culture gap – the real reason parents (and TV show makers) don't like computer games is because they don't understand them, not because they're intrinsically bad for anyone.

'PUPPIES AND KITTENS'

I would like to complain about an article in issue 3 about the Nintendo calendar. It said that girls have calendars with puppies and kittens on them, while games players have been a bit stuck when it comes to remembering important dates. Are you trying to suggest that girls are not games players? I myself have that Nintendo calendar (mine only cost £4.99). Apart from that, your magazine is great.

Yours sincerely,
Lisa Scullion, Liverpool.

We certainly weren't ruling out the possibility of a crossover group, consisting of puppy and kitten-loving girls who actually liked playing games too.

'AUGUST ORGAN'

I have read the last three issues of your august organ, and found it most enjoyable. You are particularly good when it comes to new technology, with regard to the CD ROM feature from way back, which I liked. Your feature took a calm, rational view of the situation, unlike most of your competitors (and other format magazines with CD machines on the horizon) who foolishly seem to think that the price of games will fall on CD ROM.

While this may be the case with old games, it won't be with newer products, because filling 600 Mbit of CD ROM is going to be an extremely costly business. You said Koshiro Yuzo plans to use real orchestras for his scores – that's a £120,000 bill for starters, and more if he uses digital sound recording to properly exploit the sound capabilities of the system.

Given Nintendo's infamous restrictions on developers, many of these titles will only appear on the Super CD, and that means they are going to be very expensive because of economies of scale. Also, grudgingly or not, you have all demonstrated to Nintendo your 'willingness' to pay through the nose, so that means you'll be paying more, not less.

THE SUPER PLAY INTERESTING-O-METER

We can't get enough letters about some subjects, and we get far too many on others. Here's a handy guide to which ones we mean:

HOT

The Super Nintendo abroad

Japanese things

3D games

NOT

CD ROM (for the time being)

The price of games

Games being too easy to finish

I hope you will print this letter, so my fellow Super Nintendo-ites realise the economic realities of CD ROM. However, I do agree that CD ROM promises some mind-blowing products – how about the developers of *Another World* doing a version of *Die Hard* in a similar style with Super F/X polygons over painted backgrounds and bitmapped explosions, and with heftier adventure elements – and an orchestral CD soundtrack by Michael Kamen. What do you think?
All the best,
James McLean, Glasgow.

Sounds groovy, alright. Let's just hope it's *Die Hard* they do, and not some blooming Steven Seagal film with ships in, eh?

'FOR STARTERS'

In the article about the forthcoming CD extension to the SNES, you mentioned about Philips CD-I and Nintendo crossover products. What does this actually involve? Because, as regards games, a Super Nintendo with a CD drive and a 32-bit processor is going to be able to play considerably better games than CD-I, which for starters only has a 16-bit processor. So, if this crossover product involves games being compatible with both machines, sure Super NES owners are going to suffer, because they'll be getting games that are not taking full advantage of the SNES's capabilities in order to maintain compatibility with CD-I.
Philip Z Richardson, Stoke-on-Trent.

You're absolutely right – Super Nintendo owners would be getting a raw deal if SNES CD ROM games were identical to CD-I games. But, as far as we know, no arrangement of this sort has been finalised. Hard information on the CD ROM is still incredibly difficult to come by, and the vast bulk of what you read on the subject is pure speculation. We're confident, though, that when the CD ROM does finally appear it'll be pretty special, and that the games that run on it will be far superior to those on any equivalent system, including CD-I. But it may be a while before we find out for sure – one estimate suggests the system won't be available in the UK till late 1994.

'RUINS THE LIFESPAN'

You seem to rave in your reviews about anything cute or anime-looking, eg *Kikikaikai*, a game with a Kawaii (or 'cute', for philistines) Racoon and girl in it, which I thought looked like a poor rip-off of *Mystical Ninja*; and *Tiny Toons*, which my friend has, and says is too easy, which ruins its lifespan. (*Mickey Mouse* got a high mark, and much the same could be said about that.) I've got nothing against anime, in fact I'm a fan, but it seems that if a game is pretty in presentation and graphics it automatically gets top marks.

I hope I haven't been too harsh, as generally it is a perfect mag.
Yours sincerely,
Bones, Leicester.

Look, good graphics are good graphics, whether they're cute or not. And we stressed the point in our reviews of *Mickey's Magical Quest* and *Tiny Toons* that, although they're well worth buying, many people might find the games too easy to finish – we'd have marked them quite a bit higher if they'd been more challenging. (But you're right – we are suckers for a cute looking game.) As for *Kikikaikai*, you seem to be condemning it without having even played it. It's an enjoyable little game, with the added bonus of – yes – cute graphics.

TALENTED YOUNGER SIBLINGS SPECIAL

In response to your request for news of talented younger siblings, I'd just like to say that my sister, Victoria, who is six years old, can complete level two on *Street Fighter II*.
Craig Cacchiol, Sudbury.

I am the youngest and best games player. I can beat Bowser and finish *Street Fighter II* on level four. I am four years old and my name is Stuart. I can also finish *Space Harrier II*. I can write as well, but only with my mummy's help. She wrote the hard bits.
Stuart Harper, South Wirral.

I'm writing to tell you about my five-year-old son, Matthew, after reading an article called 'Isn't That Amazing?' in issue 5 (page 83). Well, Matthew can finish *Street Fighter II* on level zero (using Blanka) and is now busy working on level one.
Yours thankfully,
Mr A Gregory, Sheffield.

'A MORE CHEERY NOTE'

Recently I treated myself to *Zelda 3* and *Super Mario World*, basing my choice on the excellent reviews you gave both games. Only one week later I had completed *Super Mario World* and three weeks later I had finished *Zelda 3*.

Amongst my joy in completing both games came anger at the ease with which I achieved it. I feel I have been cheated out of the £80 I payed for the games. Please can you tell me of a game, available in the UK market, which doesn't have such a low difficulty factor, but with much the same format (maybe an adventure game)?

On a more cheery note, I was thrilled to read that *Sensible Soccer* and *The Chaos Engine* are coming out on the Super NES, and I feel compelled to urge the Bitmap Brothers into doing a *Speedball III* for our machine too, as it was my all-time favourite game on the Amiga. (*Speedball II*, that is.) Do you see the possibility of this happening in the near future?
Yours hopefully,
Steven Clark, Paisley.

Lots of people would argue that £80 for a whole month's entertainment isn't bad going these days. But then, lots of other people wouldn't, and

HEALTH RISK SPECIAL

Guess what? Yes, we've received lots of letters on the old 'Nintendo causes epilepsy' debate recently. Here're a couple of them:

What concerns me is the health of games players. When we play a game we are usually within about three feet of the TV. Most of us use a normal TV. TVs emit beta radiation, which is fairly harmful in large doses. Most games take about two to three hours of hard concentration to finish. During this time we are absorbing this radiation.

You may argue that computer operators stare at a screen for eight hours or more a day. But a computer monitor runs at about 70 Hz, and is screened to prevent the operator from the radiation. TVs tend not to have these screens, and they run at a very flickery 50 Hz.

After a bout of games playing I usually come away with a headache and a wide, open-eyed gaze. I believe TVs should be produced at about 70 Hz to relieve eye-strain, and should have anti-radiation screens – until then all games players will have to suffer. Could we not have LCD TVs instead, which don't flicker or emit radiation at all?
Yours sincerely,
Lee Harper, South Wirral.

I'm writing to you on the subject of the controversy about Nintendo and epilepsy. I've had a SNES for eight months, and never had the slightest problem with it until two months ago, when I tried out *Super Kick Off* in a big music shop in Manchester. I had a photo-sensitive epileptic seizure, starting with muscle twitches and ending with a black-out.

Anyway, the point is that this has never happened again, even though I still play video games, and it probably never will. The store where I had a seizure was dark – make sure you play games with a light on. It was a special Nintendo unit where you are very close to the screen – so make sure you are far enough from your TV so it doesn't take up too much of your field of vision. For a normal size TV, about 2 m is sensible. For a big-screen TV, get a bit further back.

Finally, I suspect it had something to do with the game. Epileptic fits occur due to certain patterns that trigger something off in our brain. *Super KO* is an extremely fast game, and the pattern of the pitch and the flicker of the screen all contributed to the seizure.
M-AN, Manchester.

The (small) number of letters and phone calls we've received from people who are actually complaining of having suffered attacks like this suggest that they're mainly caused by games where you're concentrating on a small character with a fast-scrolling background behind it – *Super Kick Off* is an obvious example. But remember, folks: only a tiny fraction of the population seem to be affected, and they're people who are already prone to suffering from photo-sensitive epilepsy (even if they don't already know it). You're not going to catch anything from playing with your Super Nintendo – just (possibly) bring to the surface a problem you already have.

they'd probably get quite empassioned about it, so we won't take sides. It might be worth pointing out, though, that the main reason *Mario World* and *Zelda* are so 'easy' are because they've got battery backed-up memory that saves your place as you go along. Would you rather they didn't? And it might also be worth pointing out that, whether they're too easy or not, you're very much in the minority in not liking them. Oh yeah, and there are no plans for a Super Nintendo version of *Speedball* at the moment, although the Bitmaps have expressed an interest in doing one (and it would be awfully nice if they did).

'I OWN THREE'

I love anime and manga, so will any of my fave Famicom games, *Ranma 1/2* and *Fist Of The North Star*, get an official British release?

I own three manga films, *Akira*, *Dominian Tank Police* and *Venus Wars*. I think these are excellent videos. Are any of them going to be made into a Super Nintendo game?

Finally, I love the manga approach to the magazine and the excellent screenshots of the games. And please could you tell me where I could get *Ranma 1/2* magazines from, as I have looked everywhere for them. Keep up the good work!
Sayonara!
Carl Bradley, Oldham.

The manga feature in last month's *Super Play* should give you a few ideas as to where to go looking for *Ranma 1/2* comics. As for UK releases of anime-based games, well, sadly we're unlikely to see an awful lot of them. Despite being hugely popular in Japan, and also among its British fans, anime is still very much a specialist area here in the UK. And sales of anime games would most likely reflect this.

'CHILDISH FEEL'

The subject I would like to discuss is anime. I know the *Super Play* staff think it is great, and I agree – the characters can look cute – but it only works in certain games.

I have found my enjoyment of many great games slightly spoilt by the overly 'cute' sprites, eg *Super Tennis*, *Mystical Ninja*, even *Street Fighter II*. The oversized eyes and small bodies give a childish feel, and some realism is lost in these otherwise great games.

I would be very interested to know how other readers feel about these points.
Yours sincerely,
Michael Herron,
Glengormley.

KINDLY LEAVE THE STAGE

We thought that if we made this bit extra-long this month, and put in all your extra-crap jokes, the sheer horror of it might actually jolt you into seeing some sense and stopping sending us completely useless jokes.

Q Which game features Tunes Li, Eddie Fondant and the Hundreds-and-Thousands hand slap?
A *Sweet Fighter II.*
Harry H Healy, Glasgow.
1/10

A joke that gets awarded more than 5 out of 10 wins a *Super Play* T-shirt!

Q Where does *Ranma 1/2 II* go?
A He doesn't 1/2 II go anywhere, matey!
Harry H Healy, Glasgow.
0/10

Q What's a Cybernator pilot's favourite song?
A Valken On The Moon.
Harry H Healy, Glasgow.
0/10

Q Why does *Starfox* feature a falcon instead of a parrot?
A 'Cos 3D polly-gone!
Harry H Healy, Glasgow.
2/10

There was an English teacher in prison. His friend said to him: 'If you chat up the prison guard's wife, they'll let you out early.' And his friend said: 'No, that's wrong! You can't end a sentence with a proposition!'
Simon Watkins, Keynsham.
0/10

Police are investigating the theft of the police station's lavatory. They say they have nothing to go on.
Gareth Austin, Twickenham.
0/10

Bloke: Waiter, waiter, what do you call this?
Waiter: It's bean soup, sir.
Bloke: I don't care what– (*Stop this! Stop it now! – Ed.*)

Not that we want you to send any jokes or anything, but the address is Kindly Leave The Stage, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

HIGHLIGHTS

There is a boy in my class at school who has met Matt Bielby and he thinks he knows more than Matt. He challenges him to a game of *Mario Kart*. Will he say yes to the challenge?
Rupert Major, Abourfield.
He says the result would be a foregone conclusion. We'd have to agree.

I am writing to you because of your cover artist, Wil Overton. I was wondering if you can ask him if he would send me a picture of Chun Li, signed if he wanted to.
Keith Hammond, New Malden.
We asked him, and he said he didn't particularly want to. Sorry.

Does Jonathan Davies do programme links for Channel 4?
Calum Gray, London.
No.

How about a Jonathan Davies autograph each?
Two *Mario Kart* fanatics, Southport.
Look, he doesn't do programme links for Channel 4, okay?

WRITE AWAY!

We're dying to hear from you! And, if your letter gets printed, you stand to win a handy *Super Play* pen! The address to write to is:
PLAY BACK, SUPER PLAY, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH BA1 2BW.

MARIO KART SPECIAL

We've stirred up a whole tin of worms by printing people's best *Mario Kart* times...

I think it is a good idea to print all the readers' best times in *Mario Kart*. I got 1' 06.88" in Mario Circuit 1.
Gareth Austin, Twickenham.

I eventually got down to 1' 04.78", with a best lap time of 12.67".
Rob McHattie, Woking.

Mine's now down to 1' 04.65".
Alan Carter, Knebworth.

My best time on Mario Circuit 1 is 1' 03.43" and my lap record is 12.53".
Scott Upton, Leicester.

Mine is 1' 01.06" with Kong, but my fastest lap is 0' 02.44". I can't tell you how to get such a good lap time, but it can only be done once a race.
Anthony Bowry, Hayes.

NB. All these times seemed genuine enough to us, but they weren't supported by any sort of evidence. If you reckon you can do better, and you'd like to tell everyone about it, we'd rather you sent in some sort of photographic evidence – just so we can be sure.

I thought I'd write to point out that in issue 5 you say the fastest time recorded on Mario Circuit 1 is 0' 59.92". But this time was achieved on a Japanese console. How, on a British console, can we hope to compete with this sort of time, bearing in mind that the Japanese console is faster?
Lee Benning, Southampton.

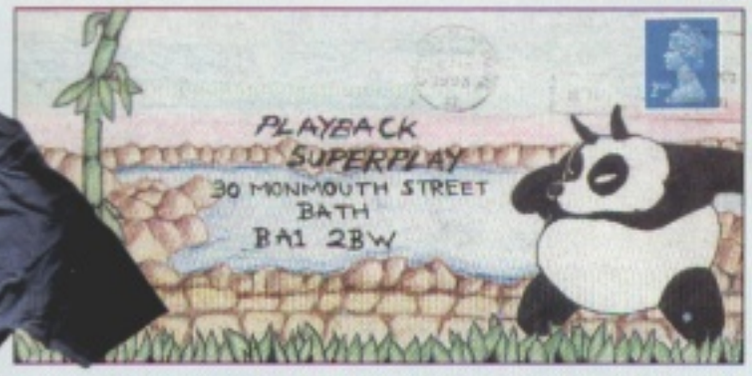
We're not completely sure about this one, and Bandai don't seem to be either. We reckon that *either* a) while the game itself may well run slower on a UK machine, the clock ticks over slower too, so on balance you should be able to achieve the same results, *or* b) the UK version of the game's been adjusted so it runs at the same speed on UK machines. In either case you should be able to achieve the same times as the top Japanese players if you keep at it. (Check out Gamefreak this issue for more news on this.)

Yes, it's the triumphant return of...

ENVELOPE ART!

Wow! This envelope art idea has been a runaway success! Seems you're a bunch of frustrated artists at heart.

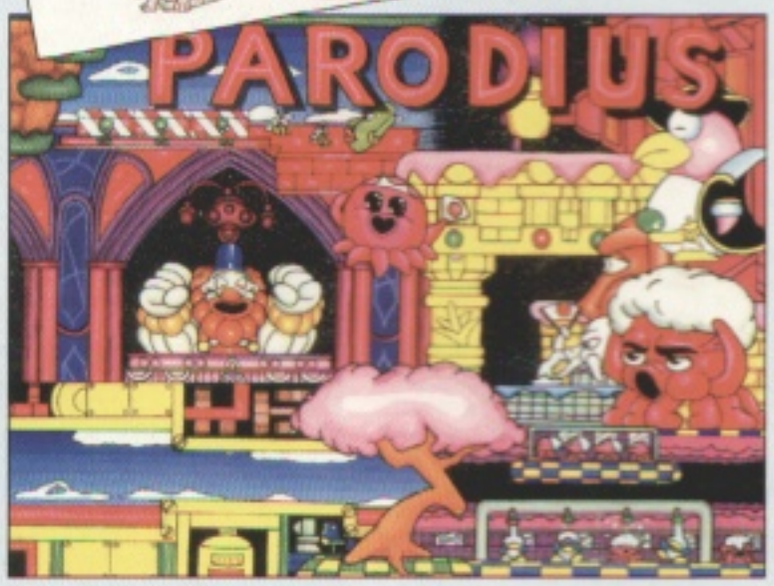
Here, then, are some of our favourites from this month's mailbag, the best of which wins a *Super Play* T-shirt. Keep decorating your envelopes, and keep sending them in. The address, as with the rest of Play Back, is, of course, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.



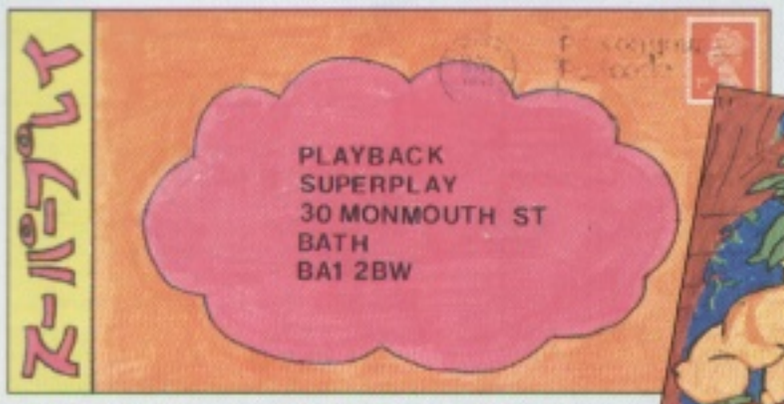
Another *Ranma* envelope, this one featuring Genma the panda, from Barnaby Purdy.

This brilliant Ranma was drawn for us by Ian Pestridge of Birmingham.

Anthony Bowry of Middlesex sent in this piece of art – we're not quite sure who it is (forgive our ignorance) but she's got a very cute cat.



Gorgeous, gorgeous, gorgeous *Parodius* artwork, again from Anthony, fails to qualify because it came *inside* an envelope, not outside of one.



Bold use of, erm, colour from London's Calum Gray, including the Japanese version of '*Super Play*' from our cover.

A suitably ugly-looking Chuck Rock from Brighton's Peter Rodway.

Great *Tiny Toons* envelope comes from Lewis Collins (*Are you sure about this? – Ed.*) of Southsea, Hants.

Positively the one-and-only 'ransom note' letter we'll ever include, this one from Barry Ferguson of County Down, Northern Ireland.

One of many, many *Mario Kart* envelopes, this one's from Surajit Sen of Doncaster.

This lovely painted Bubsy (the Bobcat) – resplendent in his *Super Play* T-shirt – comes from Chris Harris of Portsmouth. Nice one, Chris, and wear your very own *Super Play* T-shirt with pride, eh?

WHAT CART?

SUPER PLAY'S GAME LIBRARY

Yes, it's that What Cart? time of the month again. Time to marvel at just how many SNES games there really are out there (we're through the 200 mark at last!), time to check out just how good *Spanky's Quest* is once again, time to thoughtfully absorb our pithy comments on the 18 or so new games included this month, time to chuckle indulgently over our pitiful attempts to be funny, time to wince at our increasingly desperate measures to come up with Top 5 listings – time, basically, to absorb the very individual experience that is What Cart?, Britain's biggest and best Super Nintendo games catalogue.

Yes, yes – we know we haven't reviewed every Japanese-text filled RPG there is out there, and yes, yes, we know we haven't reviewed the very latest games, covered in the rest of this issue (they'll go in next month), but we think you'll find we've got everything else covered. If, however, you know different, why not write to us at What Cart? *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, and we may include your entry the next time round. You'll get a T-shirt for your trouble too.

KEY TO YOUR CHART

You wouldn't believe how easy *What Cart?* is to understand. Perhaps this diagram might go some way to convincing you, though:

GAME NAME
SUPER PROBOTECTOR (UK)
Alternative names: Contra 3 (US)/Contra Spirits (JAP)
If the game's known by other names abroad, they're listed here
PUBLISHER
Konami, 8 Mbit
CARTRIDGE ROM SIZE
NUMBER OF PLAYERS
1 or 2 players, SP2 90%
This is currently the best platform shoot-'em-up around. Superb use of Mode 7 and an amazing Konami soundtrack put this in the super league. Brilliant two-player action makes it essential stuff.
10
10
A mark out of 10. (Games with an overwhelming amount of Japanese text, rendering them more-or-less unplayable, are marked 'Impossible to judge')
A brief synopsis of the game
If the game has been reviewed in a previous issue of Super Play, here's where you'll be able to find out which one, and (yes!) how well it scored

ACROBAT MISSION (JAP)
Teichiku, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 38%
A despicably feeble vertical scrolling shoot-'em-up
3/10

ACTRAISER (JAP/US/UK)
Enix/Quintet, 6/8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 90%
A brilliant combination of strategy and platform action. Graphically great, and the music's fab. Buy the UK or US version.
9/10

THE ADDAMS FAMILY (JAP/US/UK)
Ocean, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 82%
A polished and enjoyable romp, with adventure, puzzle and shoot-'em-up bits. A real challenge that's frustrating in places, but passwords allow quick completion.
8/10

AIR MANAGER (JAP)
Alternative name: Aerobiz (US)
Koei, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players
Unintelligible unless you're Japanese, this is a well presented business strategy thing like *Railroad Tycoon*. Nice Mode 7 intro.
?/10

ALIENS VS PREDATOR (JAP)
IGS, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 28%

An unoriginal beat-'em-up, with a neat central concept, but generally dire gameplay and no explanation of the plot. Avoid.
2/10

ANOTHER WORLD (UK)
Alternative names: Outer World (JAP), Out Of This World (US)
Interplay, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 81%
The graphics in this one are superb – playing it is just like watching a film. The action is varied, and there are lots of great cinema-style close-up shots, but there isn't enough there to make it a classic.
8/10

ARCANA (US)
Alternative name: Card Master (JAP)
HAL, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player

An RPG based around a 3D perspective (like *Dungeon Master*) sounds good, but is very plodding – the combat scenes are long and drawn out. Graphically it's not bad, and the music is well done, but only really for die-hard RPG fans.
6/10

ASSAULT SUITS VALKEN (JAP/US)
Alternative name: Cybernator (US)
NCS Masiya. 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 91%
The (imaginary) principle of assault suits is a fab basis for a game, but, oddly, this is the first to properly take advantage of it. The result is a brilliant (and very Japanese) shoot-'em-up, dripping with high technology and boasting some very satisfying explosions.
9/10

ASTRAL BOUT (JAP)
A-Wave, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A wrestling/fighting game, and not a good one. Graphically not a complete disaster, but the sprite collision and playability are ropy. When you think you could buy Street *Fighter II* what's the point?
4/10

AUGUSTA MASTERS 3D GOLF (JAP)
T&E Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players
The first 3D golf game on the Super Famicom, and still rather good despite Japanese text. Graphically, it's a mixture of bit-maps and polygons and it works quite well. The screen update could be faster, though.
8/10

AXELAY (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 85%
Okay, so *Axelay*'s a little thin gameplay-wise. But – ooh! – those graphics! They're possibly the most impressive ones ever! There are also some brill baddies, and it alternates between neat horizontal and vertical scrolling.
8/10

BART'S NIGHTMARE (JAP/US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 91%
The formula may not sound promising – lots of little sub-games rather than one big one – but this is absolutely superb, and very weird. Wonderful graphics and lots of humour, and it's challenging.
9/10

BATTLEBLAZE (JAP/US)
Sammy Corp, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
An awkward game that's nowhere near as good as its contemporaries (*Street Fighter II* and *Ranma 1/2*). The graphics are okay, the sound's okay, but the gameplay's dire. There's quite a reasonable range of moves, but you could do much better.
5/10

BATTLE CLASH (US/UK)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 48%
This is the first stand-alone game released for the Super Scope. A shame that it's so short lived and awful. Cheaper than your average import, though.
4/10

BATTLE GRAND PRIX (JAP)
Naxat, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Remember *Super Sprint*, the coin-op? Well, imagine a version of it (ie an overhead view driving game) where you can only see a tiny area of the track around your car, and have to rely on signals to warn you of corners. We came to the conclusion that it's 'challenging'. Lots of babes in it though.
6/10

BEST OF THE BEST (US)
Alternative name: Super Kick Boxing (JAP)
Electro Brain, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 50%
Let's be honest: this is a kick boxing game, not a karate one. Treated as such it gets the job done pretty well. But, as with any game that comes within a mile of the word 'boxing', it gets boring fast.
5/10

BIG RUN (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 player
After a promising start, the abysmal graphics and virtually non-existent gameplay make for what is surely the worst driving game on the system. (Nothing like the original coin-op.)
2/10

BILL LAIMBEER'S COMBAT BASKETBALL (US)
Hudson Soft, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Originally an Amiga game called *Future Basketball*, this plodding *Speedball* clone is a surprisingly poor release from Hudson Soft.
3/10

BLAZEON (JAP/US)
Atlus, 8 Mbit
1 player

A tacky horizontal scroller with anime-style robots in. It's kinda different, but everything's so crude and jerky. That makes this game crap – there are so many better shoot-'em-ups to choose from.
3/10

BOMBUZAL (JAP)
Alternative name: Ka-Blooey (US)
Kemco, 4 Mbit
1 player
Clear bombs from mazes of tiles by setting off chain reactions, without getting blown up. The levels are well designed and it takes skill to negotiate them. But unfortunately the graphics are dreary, and the game's boring.
4/10

BRASS BOSS (JAP)
Lazersoft, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 56%
Another *SFII* wannabe that doesn't make the grade. The graphics are okay, and for the most part it plays okay, but *SFII* does it all so much better.
5/10

BULLS VS BLAZERS (US)
Electronic Arts, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 83%

A good, solid basketball game placing the emphasis on accuracy and detail at the expense of slick graphics. Very challenging.
8/10

CACOMA KNIGHT (JAP)
Datam, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 36%
A tedious variant of *Painter*, the ancient coin-op. It does its best to brighten up proceedings with some special backdrops, but even they're not very good.
3/10

CAMELTRY (JAP)
Alternative name: On The Ball (US)
Taito, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 52%
The idea of a rotating Mode 7 maze with a ball bouncing around it is a good one, but Taito haven't got the most from it. The levels are too easy to complete, and once you've seen them all you won't return.
5/10

CAPTAIN TSUBASU 3 (JAP)
Tecmo, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
Yikes! A football management game,

based on a Jap comic hero! Some dynamic match highlights, but unless you can read Japanese, and have tons of patience, stay away. Impossible to judge. ? 10

CAVEMAN NINJA 2 (JAP)
Data East, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 58%
The sequel to *Joe & Mac* (sort of), reasonably playable, and offers a fair amount of long-term challenge. There are hundreds of better games around. 5 10

CB WARS (JAP)
Banpresto, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A strange anime scroll-along-and-whack-nasties-with-whatever-you-can-find type of game. RPG elements and lots of Japanese text render this a poor choice for most people. Impossible to judge. ? 10

CHESSMASTER (US/UK)
Mindscape, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
You don't have much choice of SNES chess games. This plays a strong game (we, er, think), but there's room for improvement. It's awfully presented, and the tunes after each move are irritating. 5 10

CHESTER CHEETAH (JAP)
Kaneko, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 58%

Bright, colourful platform game, based on Cheetos' (American cheese snack) advertising critter – good for younger players, but it lacks challenge for everyone else. 5 10

CHUCK ROCK (US)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 61%
A well put together Stone Age platform game, with lots of imagination and fun touches, but ultimately it's all a bit bland and dull. 6 10

COMBATRIBES (JAP/US)
Technos, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A dull beat-'em-up that makes no attempt to save itself with any pick-upable weapons or interesting levels. 5 10

COSMO GANG (JAP)
Namco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 70%
A *Galaga*-style shoot-'em-up that doesn't match up to the ancient coin-op in the gameplay stakes. A fun two-player mode, and some lovely graphics and sound, but spoilt by infinite continues. 7 10

DARIUS TWIN (JAP/US)
Taito, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Lacking in levels for a *Darius* game – but this isn't all bad news. Good graphics, okay sound and not too much slow-down make it a reasonable buy, though it's not challenging in the first few levels. 7 10

DAVID CRANE'S AMAZING TENNIS (JAP/US)
Absolute Entertainment, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 80%
This *looks* like the best tennis game yet. The 3D perspective works well – until you take control of a player at the other end. A restricted viewpoint makes it hard to serve and return – a split screen would have been better. *Super Tennis* still rules. 8 10

DESERT STRIKE (JAP/US/UK)
Electronic Arts, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 90%
An addictive chopper-based shoot-'em-up with helicopteriness pouring out of it. Just like flying round a desert blowing things up with missiles (only not so hot and sandy). 9 10

D FORCE (JAP/US)
Asmik, 8 Mbit
1 player
A crap shoot-'em-up with maybe the worst graphics, sound and playability on the SNES. Mode 7 makes the useless visuals look blocky. Dreadful sound, too. Avoid! 2 10

DINOSAURS (JAP)
Alternative name: Dino City (US)
Irem, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 83%

One of our favourite platform games, this has fab graphics, cute characters and plenty of amusing bits. But it's too easy to finish. We love it anyway, though.. 8 10

DIRTY CHALLENGER (JAP)
Yutaka, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Yet another dire wrestling game. This time it includes some very dubious 'grapples' – you could be mistaken for thinking it was all a bit, well, dirty. 3 10

DRAGONBALL Z (JAP)
Bandai, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
The original Jap *Dragonball* anime series appeared on the 8-bit Famicom (NES), but this new version is the first available for the Super Famicom. An RPG with combat scenes and loads of Japanese text. Very 8-bit in look too. Impossible to judge. ? 10

DRAGON'S LAIR (US/UK)
Elite, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP1 82%
This looks gorgeous, plays well and is far better than the straight conversion of the coin-op that other machines have suffered. But the frustrating difficulty level hides a game not as long as it could be. 8 10

DRAGON QUEST V (JAP)
Enix, 12 Mbit + BB
1 player
The biggest selling game in Japan to date is a sprawling RPG with plenty of Jap text to be translated for a US release this year in the *Dragon Warrior* series. It's primitive, and very Japanese. Impossible to judge. ? 10

DRAKKHEN (JAP/US/UK)
Kemco, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP4 64%
Based on a French 16-bit computer RPG/adventure, this has reasonable graphics but an awful combat system. Most people will find this a real bore but if you *are* tempted, get the US or UK version. 6 10

EARTHLIGHT (JAP)
Hudson Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Based on a popular PC Engine game called *Nectaris*, this is an interplanetary space strategy affair, but there's enough Japanese in here to make it tricky to work out. Avoid. Impossible to judge. ? 10

EXTRA INNINGS (US)
Alternative name: Ganba League Baseball (JAP)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP2 64%
Baseball's tricky to translate well to a games machine, but this probably makes the best job of it, with cute characters and slick action. The sequel, *Pro Baseball League '93*, is even better. 6 10

F-1 EXHAUST HEAT (JAP/UK)
Alternative names: F1 ROC (US)
Ocean/Seta, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 69%
Your car's a bit small, and you don't get much warning of corners. But at least you get a 3D view of the track. Not our fave game, but some people love it. 6 10

FACEBALL 2000 (US)
Bullet-Proof Software, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 54%
On the Game Boy this 3D maze shoot-'em-up is good fun, but the SNES conversion suffers badly. Slow, jerky 3D, and confusing with two players. Not great. 5 10

FATAL FURY (JAP)
Takara, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 76%
One of a growing number of *Street Fighter II* look-a-likes, and probably the next best thing to The Big One. Looks okay, plays fine (though the controls are very awkward) and worth considering. 7 10

FINAL FANTASY II (US)
Alternative name: Final Fantasy IV (JAP)
Square Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A strange one this, as in Japan it's the fourth in a very popular series. This is the first version to make it to the SNES, and while it's graphically basic, the lovely music and the involving nature of the quest lift it way above lesser RPGs. 8 10

FINAL FANTASY V (JAP)
Square Soft, 16 Mbit + BB
1 player
A huge-selling RPG to be translated and retitled *Final Fantasy III* in the US. Buy that, unless you read Japanese. Impossible to judge. ? 10

FINAL FANTASY: MYSTIC QUEST (US)
Square Soft, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP3 79%
A spin-off younger player's version of the popular *Final Fantasy* RPG series that proves to be an enjoyable and involving quest for role-playing beginners. Much cheaper than most releases, too. 7 10

FINAL FIGHT (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 86%
The best walking-along-beating-people-up game on the SNES. Brilliant graphics, varied opposition and devastating moves. But, it lacks a two-player mode, and so gets dull in the long-term. 8 10

FINAL FIGHT GUY (JAP)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player
A pointless new version of *Final Fight* where the best character, Cody, is replaced by Guy. A poor game-music CD is included. It's easier than the original. 8 10

FIRE DODGEBALL (JAP)
Sunsoft, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A cute, anime version of a very weird game (see *SD Dodgeball* for details). The graphics are pretty good, but the game itself is a bit too simple to be particularly rewarding. The lengthy intro sequences before each game don't help, either. 6 10

FLYING HERO: BUGLE'S BIG ADVENTURE (JAP)
Sofel, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 68%

An average – if fairly likeable – Jap shoot-'em-up. It has its moments, but really needs that extra special something to stand a chance of beating *Parodius* etc. 6 10

F-ZERO (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP1 86%
A fab Mode 7 racing game. Dead fast and smooth. Watch out for the vicious computer-controlled hover cars. Bland scenery and a weird futuristic setting, but it's an impressive display of the SNES' abilities. 8 10

GEORGE FOREMAN'S KO BOXING (US)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 18%
Boxing games are invariably awful – but this awful? 1 10

GODS (US/UK)
Mindscape, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 74%
Famous Amiga platform shoot-'em-up comes to the SNES, graphics and puzzles all intact, and with extra measures of playability This'll last you ages. 7 10

GOLDEN FIGHTER (JAP)
Culture Brain, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 42%
A very ropy *Street Fighter II* 'tribute'. The graphics are rubbish, the gameplay's rubbish, the sound's rubbish... Avoid. 4 10

GPX CYBER FORMULA (JAP)
Alternative name: Cyberspin (US)
Takara, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 70%
Another top-view scroller, and another case of yikes-was-that-a-corner? But anime based this time, with some incredibly smooth scrolling. Otherwise this is a very average game. 6 10

GRADIUS III (JAP/US)
Konami, 4 Mbit
1 player
Similar to the coin-op and – astonishingly – all packed onto a 4 meg cart, this is one to check out. It's an early title, so slow-down is a problem – it rather scuppers the otherwise beautiful graphics and powerful sound. Still, it's more impressive and playable than *Super R-Type*. 7 10

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE

SUPER PLAY TOP 5 PUZZLE GAMES

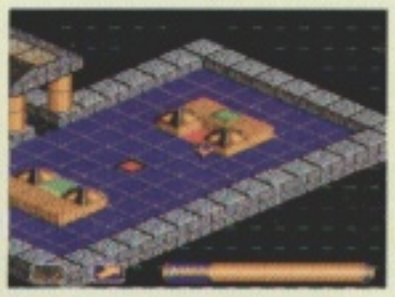
Super NES puzzle games, eh? They're all basically *Tetris*, with knobs on, aren't they? Well, no actually, and here's five to prove you wrong. (Well, four anyway.)

1 LEMMINGS (86%)
A completely absorbing – and ultra original – game this, it's jam packed with levels. A bit over-familiar now though.

2 KING ARTHUR'S WORLD (83%)
Extremely addictive (if a little bit *Lemmings*-like), with a real exploration feel to it. Not a round table in sight, though.

3 SUPER TETRIS 2+ BOMBLISS (83%)
It just had to be here, really, didn't it? A classic game that's addictive on any system – and brilliant on the SNES.

4 KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE (79%)
Compulsive, rat-squashing fun, and rather good looking at that – but probably more enjoyable for the younger games player.

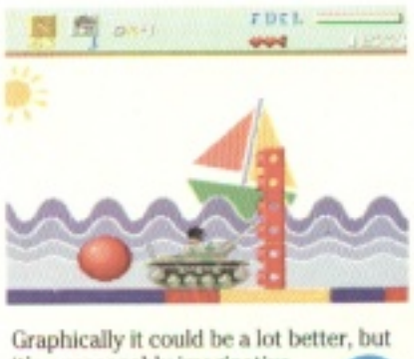


5 SPINDIZZY WORLDS (69%)
The world's only spinning top puzzle game. Not quite as good as the Spectrum original was, but still very absorbing all the same.

GUNDAM F-91 (JAP)
Bandai, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A massive selling (in Japan at least) arcade/ strategy game-thing, with Japanese text. Still, it's playable if you persevere, but this is one for real robot fans only. Impossible to judge.
?/10

GUNFORCE (JAP/US)
Irem, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 59%
Similar to *Super Probotector* in many respects, but not half as good in any of them. The 'respects', that is. (Sorry, that was a bit confusing, wasn't it?)
6/10

HARLEY'S HUMUNGOUS ADVENTURE (US)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 69%



Graphically it could be a lot better, but it's a reasonably imaginative platform game with some potential all the same.
6/10

HAT TRICK HERO (JAP)
Alternative name: Super Soccer Champ (US)
Taito, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A slick conversion of the coin-op *Football Champ*. It's fast, but too easy in one-player mode – you'll need to play a chum to have any fun. Not as good as *Super Soccer*.
7/10

HOLE-IN-ONE GOLF (JAP/US)
HAL, 8 Mbit
1 to 4 players
An old game, but still one of the best golf sims around – what it lacks in technical ingenuity, it makes up for in user friendliness. The overhead view used isn't much like playing the real game, but nice Mode 7 course introductions help – as does turning the music off!
7/10

HOME ALONE (JAP/US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP 36%
A dire attempt to cash in on the success of the movie. Hopeless graphics and sound don't rescue the banal gameplay from the claws of drudgery and tedium.
3/10

HOME ALONE 2 (US)
THQ, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 32%
We actually preferred the first *Home Alone* game to this, but in the same way that we prefer *Eldorado* to *Santa Barbara*. Another dire scrolling effort that should be left on the shelf. Feeble and predictable.
3/10

HOOK (US/JAP)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 72%
Slow-moving, but otherwise an attractive platformer that ties in with the film quite neatly. It's a bit easy to finish, though, so it'll be no, er, Peter Pan.
7/10

HUMAN GRAND PRIX (JAP)
Human, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP4 82%
If you can live with the 'unique' control system, this is the best Formula 1 game on the SNES. It's blindingly fast, with realistic handling and a useful two-player option.
8/10

HYPERZONE (JAP/US)
Hal, 8 Mbit
1 player
A poor 3D space shoot-'em-up using Mode 7, but with nothing else to recommend it. Tedium City is your only destination.
3/10

IMPERIUM (US)
Vic Tokai, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 40%
Sad, old fashioned shoot-'em-up with giant robot suits in it – but with very little hope of ever rivalling *Assault Suits Valken*. One to stay away from.
4/10

THE IREM SKINS GAME (US)
Alternative name: Major Title (JAP)
Irem, 8 Mbit,
1 or 2 players, SP3 83%
Fans of the coin-op golf game *Major Title* will love this – it's virtually identical. Fans of *Pebble Beach* and its cousins mightn't be that impressed by its accuracy.
8/10

JACK NICKLAUS GOLF (US)
Tradewest, 4 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP3 62%
Fans of golf games that present things from just behind the player will like the this, but the painfully slow way it draws the screen before each shot, and the could-be-better power meter, ruin it. Not one of our faves, but it 'll find its followers.
6/10

JAKI CRUSH (JAP)
Naxat, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 74%
The SNES needs a top-notch pinball game – something to rival the Mega Drive's *Devil Crash* and the Amiga's *Pinball Dreams*. But this isn't it. It's reasonable, but the ball moves too slowly, and the table isn't brilliantly designed.
7/10

JAMES BOND JR (US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 29%
A platform and shooting action game from hell that even the Amstrad GX4000 wouldn't have tolerated. Poor graphics, feeble sound and crap gameplay. Look, but don't buy.
2/10

JERRY BOY (JAP)
Alternative name: Smartball (US)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit
1 player
A run-of-the-mill platform game with only its blob-shaped hero to distinguish it from the crowd. Very average.
6/10

JIMMY CONNORS' PRO TENNIS TOUR (US/UK)
UBI Soft, 4 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP5 88%
Not as good as *Super Tennis*, but it's close. It has the advantage of working with the four-player adaptor. Now that *is* fun.
8/10

JOE AND MAC (JAP/US/UK)
Data East/Elite, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 72%

A good conversion of the arcade machine. Graphically it's colourful, but the tunes don't vary and the gameplay's repetitive. Young players should enjoy it.
7/10

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL (US)
Alternative name: Pro Football (JAP)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
What was a fab game on the Mega Drive and Amiga doesn't work on the SNES. Note the flat graphics and jerky scrolling. It *is* fast, But at the expense of playability.
5/10

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '93 (US/UK)
Alternative name: Pro Football '93 (JAP)
Electronic Arts, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 83%
...whereas this new, improved, updated version is loads better. The changes are mostly cosmetic, but they're enough to elevate the game to the status of 'recommended (if you like American football)'.
8/10

KICK OFF (JAP/UK)
Anco/Imagineer, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP3 52%
The most controversial computer game ever gets its second conversion to the SNES, and suffers as a result. Not as bad as *Pro Soccer*, but still flawed playability-wise.
5/10

KIKIKAIKAI (JAP)
Natsume, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 82%
This is the sort of game only the Japanese could write. Underneath the perilously weird exterior lurks an really enjoyable two-player shoot -'em-up with neat graphics and a large playing area.
8/10

KING ARTHUR'S WORLD (UK)
Jaleco, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP6 83%

Medieval *Lemmings* lookalike, with good graphics and plenty of interesting features. Very addictive, but the controls (unless you use a mouse) are a pig.
8/10

KING OF THE MONSTERS (JAP)
Takara, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A fairly enjoyable Neo Geo game that seems to have been clumsily converted to the SNES. It's really too dull and unimpressive to get even fans of the original excited.
5/10

KOSHIYEN 2 (JAP)
KAC, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 70%
This would be the most bog standard baseball game except that it's very weird and very Japanese. Not bad, overall.
7/10

KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE (US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 79%

A curious blend of pie-throwing, puzzle-solving and platform action make this a refreshing challenge. Graphics and sound are reasonable, but it's the excellently paced gameplay that makes the game. Passwords should be given more regularly to reduce repetition though.
7/10

KUNIO KEN (JAP)
Technos, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
An odd mix of beat-'em-up and adventure game. We had fun with it, beating people with pillows and suitcases, but we didn't have a clue what was going on as it's all in Japanese. You might be able to suss it out, but it got a lukewarm reception even in Japan.
?/10

LAGOON (JAP/US)
Kemco, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A fairly involving RPG, taking some elements from the *Zelda* series, but forgetting a lot of the more important ones – including a map, which can prove extremely irritating in certain areas. However, the graphics and sound are pleasant enough. Worth considering, but only after you've played *Zelda*, *Final Fantasy II* and *Soul Blazer*.
7/10

LAST FIGHTER TWIN (JAP)
Banpresto, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Super Deformed robots in a side-on beat-'em-up. Nice graphically and sonically, but limited all the same. For SD fans only.
6/10

LEGEND OF SUCCESS JOE (JAP)
K Amusement, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Japanese boxing game, based on a poor Neo Geo original, with basic graphics and sound, and not enough moves. Still, as boxing games go, it ain't too bad.
6/10

LEGEND OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA (US)
Alternative name: Goeman 3 (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
One of the best games for the system, mixing RPG adventure-style wandering with side-on platform action. Wonderful music, fab graphics and a real challenge. Though the Jap version is accessible, buy the US cart to get the best value from this.
9/10

LEMMINGS (JAP/US/UK)
Sunsoft, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 86%
A hit on every format it's been released on. It takes a while to get to grips with, but *Lemmings* is one of the most original, ingenious and addictive games ever. Each level has a password, and there are loads of them . A *Super Play* fave.
8/10

LETHAL WEAPON (UK)
Ocean, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 57%

Unadventurous platform shoot-'em-up, with a frustrating tendency to send you right back to the beginning every time you miss your footing, which you'll do – a lot. Okay, but Ocean can manage better (see the new *Addams Family* game).
5/10

MAGICAL GUY ADVENTURE (JAP)
Bandai, 4 Mbit
1 player
A jolly platform game combining wacky Japanese humour with cute sprites and backdrops. Not in the class of *Super Mario World*, but entertaining anyway.
6/10

MAGIC SWORD (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player
Capcom's first disappointing release – not surprising when the arcade game was so awful. Instead of improving the gameplay for the SNES, they've just translated the original. A bodge-job, with mixed quality graphics and bad slow-down.
6/10

MARIO PAINT (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP6 55%
No game, but a limited, crude paint package – and one where you can't print out your results! Some nifty features, admittedly, but the best thing about the whole package is the mouse that comes with it.
5/10

METAL JACKET (JAP)
Atlus, 8 Mbit
1 player
Horrible. Atlus aren't doing themselves any favours attempting a platform game – a genre where you have to be good to stand out. This is an *E-SWAT* clone with stilted animation, dire sound and inept gameplay.
2/10

MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST(JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 89%
One of the most polished platformers around, though it's marred by the inclusion of infinite continues. Stunning backdrops, sprites and varied enough to impress anyone – it's just a shame it's too easy.
9/10

MUSYA (JAP)
Datam, 8 Mbit
1 player
One of the worst Super Famicom games ever – though it's up against stiff competition. Initially, the nicely shaded backdrops give it the look of a *Ninja Spirit* clone, but when you see your hero mince along and twiddle his stick, it palls.
3/10

NHLPA HOCKEY (US/UK)
Electronic Arts, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 87%
Not *quite* as good as the Mega Drive version (the graphics are jerky, though you wouldn't notice unless you'd seen the original). Still a great ice hockey game, with loads of playability and atmosphere.
8/10

NOLAN RYAN'S BASEBALL (US)
Romstar, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 75%
Just as slick as *Extra Innings*, but without the cute characters, and it's slightly trickier to control. Still, not a bad game.
7/10

NORTH STAR KEN V (JAP)
Toei, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
This addition to an inexplicably popular range of *Zelda*-style FRP's – it's based on *Fist Of The North Star*, believe it or not – looks rubbish to us. If you speak Japanese it might, of course, be brilliant, but we doubt it. Impossible to judge.
7/10

NORTH STAR KEN 6 (JAP)
Toei, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 42%
This has massive sprites but nothing much to actually do. It's just another failed *Street Fighter II*-a-like.
4/10

OTHELLO WORLD (JAP)
Tsukuda, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Plays a strong game of *Othello* (if you set it to 'difficult'), looks good, and has some cute bits. But why would anyone want to spend $40 on a cartridge that plays *Othello*? Fine for brushing up your technique, but otherwise very sad.
6/10

PAPER BOY 2 (US/UK)
Mindscape, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP2 29%
In this game you're a newspaper delivery boy (or girl) and the object is to cycle along, er, delivering newspapers. There are some obstacles to avoid, things to hit with papers for bonus points, and that's about it. It's horribly boring, and really can't be recommended.
2/10

PEBBLE BEACH GOLF LINKS (JAP/US/UK)
T&E Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players, SP6 82%
The third addition to the 3D golf series, and unsurprisingly very similar to the others. Accurate down to the waves on the beach, but the porn movie music is laughable.
8/10

PGA TOUR GOLF (JAP/US/UK)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP5 60%

Slick presentation, masking the fact that this is a poor SNES conversion of a fab sports game. On other systems *PGA Tour* is *the* golf sim, but EA's lack of SNES skill ruins it.
6/10

PHALANX (JAP/US)
Kemco, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 70%
Horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-ups are two a penny on the SNES, and a new contender has to be different to stand out. This one has some decent graphics and challenging gameplay, but is forgettable.
7/10

PILOTWINGS (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP1 92%
SNES-owning aviation fans aren't spoilt

for choice at present, but this should be enough to, er, spin their propellers. It has a huge range of flying machines, and super-smooth 3D graphics, and there's even a decent game in here, too. 9/10

PIPEDREAM (JAP)
Bullet-Proof Software, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 66%
A well turned-out puzzle where you've got to link different shaped bits of pipe. Okay, but it gets boring fast. 6/10

PITFIGHTER (US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 14%
An appalling conversion of a popular coin-op. Dire graphics and awful gameplay. The pits. 1/10

POPULOUS (JAP/US/UK)
Imagineer, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 85%
The original Jap version of a classic UK game that puts you in the shoes of God. A smashing game, though it *can* get frustrating (and quite boring) eventually. 8/10

POWER ATHLETE (JAP)
Kaneco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 49%
Another attempt to cash in on *Street Fighter II* that doesn't really work. 'Crap – but in a groovy kind of way', apparently. 5/10

PRINCE OF PERSIA (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 89%
A superb conversion of the computer classic with new graphics, a brilliant intro and a fab *Lawrence Of Arabia*-style soundtrack. Not an easy game, but the password system allows progression without too much trouble. A classic. 9/10

PRO BASEBALL LEAGUE '93 (JAP)
Sony Music Entertainment, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 77%
This is the Japanese sequel to *Extra Innings*. It's got some really cute characters, slick animation and some neat extra touches as well. If you like baseball, you'll love this. 7/10

PRO SOCCER (JAP)
Alternative name: World League Soccer (US)
Imagineer, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
A really shaky conversion of *Kick Off*, with crude graphics and hopeless gameplay. 3/10

PUSHOVER (US/UK)
Ocean, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP3 78%
An enjoyable domino toppling-style puzzle game, converted from home computers, with lots of short-term fun. Once all 100 levels are completed, however, it's unlikely you'll ever return to it. 7/10

Q*BERT 3 (JAP/US)
NTVIC, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 67%
Real nostalgia value, as players of the 10-year-old coin-op will confirm. And plenty of effort's gone into making it look the part. But it's only mildly amusing. 6/10

RACE DRIVIN' (US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP3 35%

Fans of the original coin-op will be horrified by this driving game. 3D polygons and the SNES go together like, um, chips and custard. Poor programming on unsuitable hardware. 3/10

RAIDEN DENSETSU (JAP)
Alternative name: Raiden Trad (US)
Toei, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A great game on the PC Engine and Mega Drive, but slow on the SNES and not recommended. It should have been good, but the programmers were too inexperienced on the machine to do the job well. 4/10

RAMPART (US)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 79%
So primitive-looking you wonder why it was allowed to live. (Well, apart from the great 3D bit.) But a few minutes playing reveal a game that's actually fab fun, and two-player mode almost rivals *Mario Kart*. 8/10

RANMA 1/2 (JAP)
NCS Masiya, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A neat one-on-one beat-'em-up with odd anime characters (who change sex when they get wet, and sometimes into giant pandas – don't worry, there's a Japanese TV series explaining it all). Mismatching of characters is a problem, but on the whole it's great to look at and play. 8/10

RANMA 1/2 PART TWO (JAP)
NCS Masiya, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 71%

Cute, unusual characters, and a good looking beat-'em-up, but far too easy, with some characters much, much stronger than others. Slightly inferior to the original, but still likable, at least. 7/10

RIVAL TURF (JAP/US/UK)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 58%
Final Fight's main rival. Not as 'together' as its opponent – repetitive baddies and rougher animation are the main qualms – but it has simultaneous two-player action, including a *SFII*-style head-to-head mode. Which one do you go for? Um, well there's always *Turtles*... 6/10

ROAD RIOT (US)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 20%
Road Riot's the worst driving game on the Super Nintendo, we reckon. This is really primitive in every respect, despite a split-screen two-player mode, and no fun at all. 2/10

ROAD RUNNER: DEATH VALLEY RALLY (JAP/US/UK)
Sunsoft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 42%

The atmosphere of the cartoon is captured perfectly, with wonderful cartoony graphics and hilarious intro and outro sequences, but the game itself stinks – it's just a simplistic, poorly-executed platform game. For *Road Runner* die-hards only. 4/10

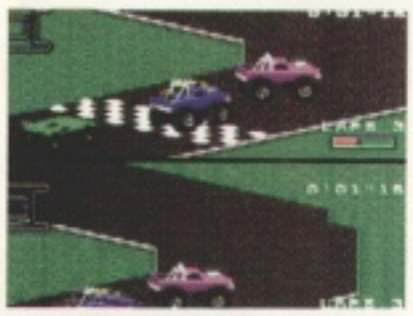
THE ROCKETEER (JAP/US)
IGS, 8 Mbit
1 player
Lovely graphics, but that's about it. It consists of watching a string of mini-games in which you don't really get much say – it's just luck if you proceed from one game to the next. Awful. 3/10

ROBOCOP 3 (US/UK)
Ocean, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 66%
A neat *Robocop* feel, but gameplay-wise this is severely wanting. It's frustratingly difficult, and perseverance is rewarded by an unimaginative shooter with little connection to the film. 6/10

ROGER CLEMENS' MVP BASEBALL (US)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 73%
Baseball games don't come much better presented than this. Fab animation and action viewed through different camera angles make this thoroughly enjoyable. 7/10

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS II (JAP/US)
Koei, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 12 players
Loads of interlocking ancient Chinese kingdoms make alliances, split up, then make other alliances, lots of people (presumably) get killed, and we can't make sense of any of it. The recently-become-available US version reveals a simple little game under all the maps and text-boxes, but still not recommended. 5/10

RPM RACING (JAP/US)
Interplay, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players



RPM (Radical Psycho Machines) – ridiculous trucks with big tyres that fascinate Americans. The scrolling's rough, you need clairvoyant powers to anticipate corners, and it uses flickery interlace graphics to no obvious effect. But good fun. 6/10

RUSHING BEAT RUN (JAP)
Jaleco, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 60%
The original *Rival Turf*, although fine as beat-'em-ups go, was never brilliant, exactly. And this sequel isn't a great deal better. The graphics aren't bad, but it's very repetitive and too easy to finish. 6/10

SD DODGEBALL (JAP)
Banpresto, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
Based on an imaginary sport which involves knocking out the opposing team by throwing the ball at them, this is one of a series of Dodgeball games (*Fire Dodgeball*'s another), and the worst. 5/10

SD GREAT BATTLE (JAP)
Banpresto, 6 Mbit
1 player
Japan's popular Super Deformer series has spawned a lot of Super Famicom spin-off games, and they sell, no matter how cruddy they are! *SD Great Battle* was the first of the genre, and isn't that great, being a crusty old arcade adventure with tedious game-play. You have been warned. 4/10

SD GUNDAM (JAP)
Bandai, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Again we head off to Japanese RPG-land, this variant starring a 'Super Deformed' (ie squished and cutified) version of *Gundam*, the most popular 'mecha' robot character in Japan. The format is traditional Japanese RPG, but the crappy graphics, sound and Jap text make it unplayable. Impossible to judge. ?/10

SIM CITY (JAP/US/UK)
Maxis/Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP1 84%
Build the city of your dreams... then bring it to its knees! The SNES version of this all-time great is probably the best yet (even more user-friendly) although it hardly pushes the machine to its limits. Addictive, in the short-term. 8/10

SIM EARTH (JAP)
Imagineer, 6 Mbit + BB
1 player
A follow-on from *Sim City* that tries to bite off more than it can chew. You're basically put in charge of the entire planet, which would be horrendous enough in itself, but when the whole game's in Japanese... er, no thanks. Impossible to judge. ?/10

SKÜLJAGGER (US)
American Softworks, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 58%

A lacklustre piratic-platform game that's very easy and not going to take you long to finish. Very weird bubble gum bits. 5/10

SONIC BLAST MAN (JAP)
Taito, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 69%
A scrolling beat-'em-up with a niftier central character than most – he's a superhero with a deadly line in punches. It's a beat-'em-up nonetheless, though, and consequently gets pretty dull. 7/10

SOUL BLAZER (US)
Alternative title: Soul Blader (JAP)
Enix, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 89%
Slick, graphically gorgeous and not entirely unlike *Zelda* (ie an RPG, Japanese-style). Avoid *Soul Blader*, the Japanese version (unless you're Japanese). 9/10

SPACE FOOTBALL (US)
Alternative name: Super Linearball (JAP)
Triffix, 4 Mbit
1 player
If you've played *Ballblazer* on the Commodore 64 before, that's probably the closest to this – football, played between two 'things' on a fast, 3D scrolling pitch. It' provides lots of thrills in the short-term, but it isn't enough to justify spending this much on a game. 6/10

SPANKY'S QUEST (JAP/US)
Natsume, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A monkey called Spanky? Bouncing bubbles? You just wander round lots of

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY

TOP 5 SIDEKICKS

All the best heroes have a sidekick – someone to talk to, someone to look up to them, someone to help them out of trouble. And it's no different on Super NES. Here's our pick of 'best friends'.

1 YOSHI
Mario's pal has stuck with him through five platform games, plus assorted spin-offs. What a guy.

2 DINOSAUR KIDS
These little guys ride on top of the dinos, jumping off to help out at tricky moments. Great.

3 ANOTHER WORLD MONSTER
This is your pal – the turncoat alien who helps you throughout the game.

4 JEEP IN SUPER SWIV
As everyone picks the helicopter, this is really its sidekick, but it's more challenging to play.

5 MILES 'TAILS' PROWER
Tails has been with the blue, spiky one in just one game... (*That's it, You really are fired, OUT – Ed.*)

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE

SUPER PLAY

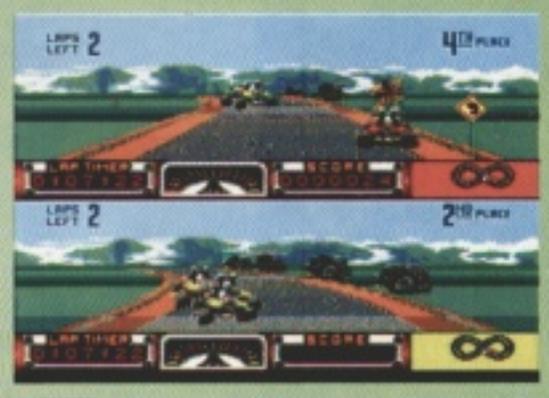
TOP 5 WORST GAMES

Oh dear. It seems – despite being the world's best games machine and everything – the Super Nintendo still has its fair share of dogs. Here are, in our opinion, five of the of games you really, really must avoid at all costs.

1 PITFIGHTER (14%)
Dreadful – with useless controls and laughable graphics. The worst beat-'em-up out there.

2 GEORGE FOREMAN'S KO BOXING (18%)
Terrible graphics, no control, nothing to do and it's boxing.

3 VANNA WHITE'S WHEEL OF FORTUNE (19%)
The only good thing about this is the pic of Vanna White.



4 ROAD RIOT (20%)
This collects first prize for the worst driving game on the Super Nintendo.

5 D FORCE
Crap graphics, sound and hopeless gameplay. The worst SNES blaster ever.

similar-looking screens, killing baddies (with the bubbles) and collecting keys. Boring. 5/10

SPIDERMAN & THE X-MEN (US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 72%

A multi-character platform romp that loses its appeal fast. Unattractive graphics are only saved by imaginative music. Fun for a bit, but it's dated already. 7/10

SPINDIZZY WORLDS (JAP/US/UK)
Ascii, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 69%
Spindizzy's sparkle seems to have dulled a little since its heyday on the Spectrum, partly thanks to the game's shift of emphasis from exploration to puzzle solving. A neat little thing all the same. 7/10

STREET FIGHTER II (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 16 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 94%
This is the game that's selling SNESs by the bucket-load. It's 'streets' ahead of other beat-'em-ups, and a near-perfect conversion of the coin-op. A must-buy, though expensive on official release. 9/10

STRIKE GUNNER (JAP/US/UK)
Athena, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 65%
Average vertical blaster, with unvaried backdrops, but nice sprites and explosions. A dull game that only works in two-player mode. 6/10

SUPER ADVENTURE ISLAND (JAP/US/UK)
Hudson Soft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 75%
Simplistic, *Wonderboy*-style gameplay in this third instalment of the series made popular on the NES. Aside from the ugly Master Higgins, the bright backgrounds and impressive Yuzo Koshiro dance tunes make this an attractive game. A bit confusing, but otherwise fab. 7/10

SUPER ALESTE (JAP/UK)
Alternative name: Space Megaforce (US)
Toho/Compile, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 87%
Evidence that the SNES can handle a manic *Gunhed*-style shooter with ease. Fab sprite handling (Mode 7) and no slow-down mean it's more a technical achievement than that well designed, and it's a bit weapon-mad. But an excellent buy. 8/10

SUPER BASEBALL SIMULATOR 1,000 (JAP/US)
Culture Brain, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 49%

Another middling baseball game. The pitching and batting are good, but the fielders are unco-operative and the graphics poor, with pointless Mode 7 whizzing about. The music's good, though. 5/10

SUPER BASES LOADED (US)
Alternative name: Super Professional Baseball (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 55%
This works okay, but it's just as limited in scope as other baseball games on the SNES, and the graphics are jerky. 5/10

SUPER BASES LOADED II (US)
Alternative name: Super Professional Baseball II (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 69%
Extraordinarily and uncannily similar to *Super Bases Loaded I*. (See above.) 7/10

SUPER BASKETBALL (UK)
Alternative names: NCAA Basketball (US), Super Dunkshot (JAP)
HAL, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 84%
This is famous for its 3D graphics – the pitch spins and zooms in and out impressively. It's got brilliant sound effects, too. And it plays great basketball. A bit confusing, but otherwise fab. 8/10

SUPER BATTER UP (US)
Namco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 53%
A difficult-to-control baseball game, with garish graphics and poor animation. There are so many better ones out there. 5/10

SUPER BATTLETANK (US)
Absolute, 4 Mbit
1 player
The prehistoric *Battlezone* coin-op gets a new lease of life in this Gulf War tank game. This looks livelier than the wire-frame graphics of the original, and has some good explosions and exciting link sequences, but, frankly, it's still boring. 5/10

SUPER BIRDIE RUSH (JAP)
Data East, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP3 76%
A cute cartoony-looking golf game with well drawn fairways and greens. However, this isn't as playable as *Hole-in-One*. 7/10

SUPER BOWLING (JAP/US)
Athena, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 48%
There isn't enough to bowling to fill out a whole game. This one pads itself out with neat graphical interludes etc, but the real thing's so much more fun. 4/10

SUPER CASTLEVANIA IV (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 91%

A huge, sprawling sequel to the NES games. After a dull start this turns into one of the best platform games ever. More action is needed, but superb parallax and incredible sound-tracks generate an atmosphere appreciated by serious gamers. 9/10

SUPER CHINESE WORLD (JAP)
Culture Brain, 8 Mbit
1 player
A sequel to the popular 8-bit Famicom game *Little Ninja Bros*. The overhead viewpoint changes at regular intervals for combat. Cutish but rather basic, with loads of Japanese text. Impossible to judge. ?/10

SUPER CUP SOCCER (JAP)
Alternative name: Super Goal (US)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A rival to *Super Soccer*? Not really. This takes a side-on, jerkily scrolling viewpoint and isn't going to impress anyone. That's a shame, because it goes into lots of detail – moves and rules-wise – and there are some nice graphical touches. 6/10

SUPER DOUBLE DRAGON (JAP/US)
Technos, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 68%
A wide variety of moves, and some very satisfying thumping and kicking action, inject a bit of life into a deceptively crappy looking beat-'em-up. Enjoyable, but a bit easy and rather '8-bit' all round. 7/10

SUPER EDF (JAP/US)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 player
A pretty, horizontally scrolling effort, but with some boring and unchallenging gameplay. Similar to the coin-op it's based on, *EDF* has some well drawn backdrops and sprites. But the music is bland, and slow-down spoils the action. 6/10

SUPER F1 CIRCUS (JAP)
Nichibutsu, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP1 83%
This looks ordinary, but is one of the few overhead-view racing games that works. Fast, with a good 'driving feel' and plenty of options to cater for the long-term player. Recommended. 8/10

SUPER F1 CIRCUS (JAP)
Nichibutsu, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Limited edition. As above, but with real Grand Prix names.

SUPER F1 GRAND PRIX (JAP)
Video System Co, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Nothing to do with the popular Amiga *F1 Grand Prix*, this is along the same lines as *Battle Grand Prix*, without the split-screen two-player mode. That means you get to see more of the track on-screen, and hence slightly more warning of corners coming up, but not much. 5/10

SUPER FIRE PRO WRESTLING (JAP)
Human, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Nowhere near as smart-looking as *WWF*, but more challenging (the 20 wrestlers all behave differently, for a start). But in one-player mode it's impossible to beat the computer. Okay, if you can live with the dull visuals and haul in a friend. 6/10

SUPER GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 85%
Another sequel, unique to the SNES. It's got some brill graphics (with loads of slow-down) and nice tunes, but it's very tough – and, as it lacks battery back-up or passwords, it can be very frustrating. The huge levels only have a few restart points, too. Well put together, but difficult. 8/10

SUPER MARIO KART (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP1 93%

The best driving game ever, the best two-player game ever. It's perfect. Four brilliant games in one: there's the Grand Prix game, the Time Trial, the two-player Head to Head, and the amazing balloon game. 9/10

SUPER MARIO WORLD (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 94%
What more can we say about this huge game? On the downside, the backgrounds are repetitive, but this is a gameplayer's dream come true – you'll want to spend weeks deciphering it. Though real *Mario* aficionados tend to prefer Mario's third trip, this remains (along with *Zelda*) Nintendo's flagship game. 9/10

SUPER NBA BASKETBALL (JAP/US)
Tecmo, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 86%
While *Super Basketball*/*Super Dunkshot*

is the basketball game to go for if you want to wow your friends, this one is a bit more playable, accurate and comprehensive. 8/10

SUPER NINJA (JAP)
Koei, 12 Mbit + BB
1 player
You'd never know this was 12 meg – it has the flat colours, simple graphics and laughable animation of an early NES game. It uses the same overhead view as *Zelda* et al, but being Japanese is impossible to play. Impossible to judge. ?/10

SUPER OFF ROAD (JAP/US/UK)
Trade West, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Another overhead view driving game, but we're allowed to see the whole track for once (phew). We're racing monster trucks with a 3D(ish) perspective. The trucks look great bouncing about, and, short-term, it's good fun. And great music. 7/10

SUPER PANG (JAP)
Alternative name: Super Buster Bros (US)
Capcom, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP1 72%
The arcade original was a fantastic game, but one that allowed two people to pop bubbles at once. This is a good conversion, with smart graphics and plenty of speed, but unfortunately only one can play, and that gets boring. 7/10

SUPER PARODIUS (UK)
Alternative name: Parodius (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player
A fab conversion of the coin-op, that easily ranks as the best of Konami's recent string of classics. Superbly colourful sprites, a hilarious sense of the bizarre, and excellent music are the icing on the cake. Hugely enjoyable (though a little easy). 9/10

SUPER PLAY ACTION FOOTBALL (US)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP2 71%
A faithful implementation of American football that'll please fans, but not the *John Madden*-basher we've been waiting for. Not a patch on *Madden '93*... 7/10

SUPER PROBOTECTOR (UK)
Alternative names: Contra 3 (US)/Contra Spirits (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 90%
The best platform shoot-'em-up around. Superb use of Mode 7 and amazing sound put this in the super league. Brill two-player action makes it essential stuff. 9/10

SUPER R-TYPE (JAP/US/UK)
Irem, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 72%

Beautifully designed baddies, and some of the best graphics on the SNES, make this one of the best-looking shooters around. Not perfect, thanks to jerky scrolling, terrible slow-down and no restart points. It also lacks the best parts of the coin-op – *R-Type II*, surprisingly, not the original game – on which it's based. 7/10

SUPER SHANGHAI (JAP)
Hot B, 8 Mbit
1 player
It's hard to see what's 'super' about it, other than a show-offy intro and the odd silly sound effect, but as a version of *Shanghai*, the puzzle game, it works. Relaxing and compulsive, but not great. 6/10

SUPER SMASH TV (JAP/US/UK)
Acclaim, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 84%
A translation of the ultra-violent coin-op, this is incredibly good short-term fun. No slow-down, plenty of tough bits and bags of addictiveness – you'll keep coming back to it. Recommended. 8/10

SUPER SOCCER (US/UK)
Alternative name: Super Formation Soccer (JAP)
Human/Nintendo, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 83%
This is probably the closest you'll get to real footy on the SNES. Impressive 3D graphics, and jolly good fun to play. But it doesn't really feel much like football as such, perhaps because the rules have been messed around a bit. We're still waiting for the SNES' equivalent of *Sensible Soccer*. 8/10

SUPER STAR WARS (JAP/US)
JVC, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 89%
The music is the first thing that hits you – a perfect rendition of all the best tunes from the film – followed by the fantastic *Star Wars*y feel that pervades the whole thing. If you loved the film, you'll love this too. (Oh, and it's great fun to play, too.) 9/10

SUPER SWIV (US/UK)
The Sales Curve, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 82%

A slick and playable two-player shoot-'em-up, with great graphics, and interesting controls. Good fun, if perhaps a little boring in the long run? 8/10

SUPER TENNIS (JAP/US/UK)
Tonkin House, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 92%
One of the best tennis games on any machine (only rivalled by two fab tennis games on the PC Engine). The range of shots available is amazing. It's not all bashing a ball backwards and forwards, either – there's a comprehensive line-up of tournaments and things to enter, too. Brilliant. 9/10

SUPER TETRIS 2 + BOMBLISS (JAP)
Bullet-Proof Software, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP5 83%
Tetris is probably the best puzzle game ever, but doesn't always convert well to different formats. No worries with the SNES version, though, which boasts lots of extra bits (like *Bombliss*) in addition to a solid rendition of the original game. 8/10

SUPER VALLIS (JAP)
Telenet, 8 Mbit
1 player
A conversion of the PC Engine CD ROM game, featuring the exploits of lots of Japanese girlies but no excitement. It's too contrived, boring and linear to live. 5/10

SUPER WAGAN ISLAND (JAP)
Namcot, 8 Mbit
1 player
Funny, with cute graphics and likeable characters, this is a semi-arcade, semi-text-based adventure for the younger player – we got a fair way into it without understanding what was going on. (It's all in Japanese!) Impossible to judge. ?/10

SUPER VOLLEY II (JAP)
Video System, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 82%
Weird-looking, with a determinedly two-dimensional perspective. But a wealth of 'special moves', and the fact that's it's a coin-op conversion, make a game that's fab fun to play – especially with two players. 8/10

SUPER WWF (JAP/US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 74%
Marvellous graphics, and enormous fun to play – short-term. But, all the wrestlers behave the same. And there's no tournament system like on other versions, either – you win or lose a fight and that's it. *WWF* isn't recommended. 7/10

SUZUKI F1 (UK)
Alternative name: Aguri Suzuki F1 Super Driving (JAP)
LOZC, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Fast, 3D Mode 7 courses *and* tunnels and bridges? This game is very well presented, but suffers from the no-warning-of-corners problem that plagues SNES driving games. However, the split-screen two-player mode is a bonus. 7/10

SYVALION (JAP/UK)
JVC, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 46%
An odd maze-based scrolling shoot-'em-up where you guide a dragon down baddy-infested passages. It looks tacky but is actually quite good. Not much of a challenge, though, and not one you'll return to. 5/10

TEST DRIVE II: THE DUEL (US/UK)
Accolade, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 58%

A fairy good conversion of the PC original to SNES, but it's difficult to control so you tend to crash all the time. Very unexciting driving feel too. 5/10

THE KING OF RALLY (JAP)
Meldac, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 39%
The most eye-catching 3D effect in years, but that's really about it. The fact that there are no other cars on the road, and the unimaginative design of the courses, turns into a battle to stay awake. 4/10

THUNDER SPIRITS (JAP/US)
Toshiba EMI, 8 Mbit
1 player
A conversion of the well respected Mega Drive game *Thunderforce 3*, but it isn't as good on the SNES – slow-down spoils the action! Everything else is very similar to the MD game – ie no effort has been made to use any of the special features that the SNES can offer – which results in rather a missed opportunity. 6/10

TINY TOONS (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 89%
The ultimate in cartoon-style graphics, animation and sound, with bags of variety and challenge. It's in danger of being *too* cute, but it's impossible not to love it. 9/10

TKO BOXING (US)
Alternative name: World Championship Boxing (JAP)
Sofel, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Boxing games are difficult to pull off, and this is the kind of thing that happens as a result. It's well presented, but the gameplay is really simplistic and gets boring fast. Steer well clear. 3/10

TOP GEAR (US/UK)
Alternative name: Top Racer (JAP)
Kemco, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 76%
So fast it'll make your eyes go squiffy. The screen is divided down the middle so two players can compete – it's dull as a one-player game. It was developed by Gremlin, so fans of their *Lotus* games will be on familiar ground here. No smooth Mode 7 graphics or elaborate trackside detail, just lots of driving fun. 7/10

TURTLES IV: TURTLES IN TIME (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 84%
This is a very good beat-'em-up. Superb graphics, some clever characterisation, frantic gameplay, and a terrific assortment of different levels means plenty of fun. On the downside, it does get repetitive, and doesn't take long to finish. 8/10

ULTIMATE FOOTBALL (JAP)
Sammy, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
American football – what a ridiculous sport, eh? Still, that needn't prevent *Ultimate Football* from being a decent game. The problem is that this is so limited in both scope and technical merit that it can't really be recommended to anyone except real footy fans. 6/10

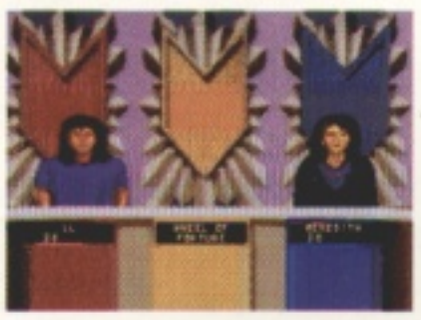
ULTRAMAN (JAP/US/UK)
Bandai, 8 Mbit
1 player
At first it's laughable: a ridiculous-looking giant superhero beating up monsters that look like people in rubber suits. But then you realise that's how it's meant to be. This is based on those dreadful Japanese disaster movies you occasionally see on Channel 4. Laughable. 4/10

UN SQUADRON (US/UK)
Alternative name: Area 88 (JAP)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 91%
Brilliantly designed pseudo-conversion of the coin-op, and still one of the best games on the Super Nintendo. Although it slows down in places, the action is still exciting. Sonically average, but graphically superb, and a *Super Play* favourite. 9/10

VOLLEYBALL TWIN (JAP)
Tonkin House, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 76%
Volleyball from the people who brought us *Super Tennis*. The slow scrolling tends to knacker your chances of receiving the ball from time to time, but otherwise it plays pretty solidly (and the Beach Volley is something else). 7/10

WAIALAE COUNTRY CLUB (JAP/US)
T & E Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players
This is the second of three golf games all using the same programming and graphics (the other two being *Augusta Golf* and *Pebble Beach*) but all representing different courses. Accurately depicted and probably the best golf series on the Super Nintendo by far. 8/10

WHEEL OF FORTUNE (US)
Gametek, 4 Mbit
1 to 2 players, SP2 19%



A really tedious quiz-show conversion that shouldn't have happened at all. A guest appearance by Vanna White is perhaps the only reason we actually gave it a mark at all. 1/10

WING COMMANDER (US)
Mindscape, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 60%
A big 3D spaceship sim/shoot-'em-up thing. Overrated in its original PC form, and a less-than-sparkling SNES conversion doesn't help matters. But, having said that, it's not actually *bad*. 6/10

WINGS II (US)
Alternative names: Sky Mission (JAP), Blazing Skies (UK)
Namco, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP2 71%
Not quite as impressive as the screenshots (see *Super Play* issue 2) make it out to be, but still an undeniably attractive and atmospheric World War I game. It's also the only existing Super Nintendo flight sim where you can actually shoot things. 7/10

WORDTRIS (US)
Spectrum Holobyte, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 40%

Tetris-based puzzle game (aren't they all?), with some potential. However, assorted glaring faults (chiefly that it gives you no time to think, resulting in far too great an element of luck) make it one to avoid. 4/10

WORLD CLASS RUGBY (UK)
Misawa Entertainment Co, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 74%
The only rugby game on the SNES, and a good one at that. Imagine a polished *Kick Off* with odd-shaped balls and you're there. 7/10

XANDRA'S BIG ADVENTURE (JAP)
Namcot, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 88%
An obscure platform game that ought to be better known. Versatile and very unusual, with a great central character, and the gameplay, though a bit patchy, is brilliant fun, despite all the Japanese text. 8/10

XARDION (JAP/US)
Asmik, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
From the makers of *D Force* comes another disaster! This time it's an *E-SWAT* clone – you control a robot that must progress through different zones, each with a guardian. Sounds okay, but the dreadful graphics, awful sonics, and pathetic gameplay and structure ruin it. 4/10

X-ZONE (US)
Kemco, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP6 55%
Nice bit of kit, that Super Scope – shame about the games. This has the dubious distinction of being the best so far, but it still ain't saying much. Oh dear. 5/10

YS III (JAP/US)
Tonkin House, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Not as good as the prequel (*YS Books 1 & 2*) on the PC-Engine CD ROM, but still a top quality RPG. Instead of an overview of the landscape, you get a scrolling side-on perspective, and though it's not as big as the first two-games, it's fun. 7/10

ZAN II (JAP)
Wolf Team, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A pretty full-screen map view – and plenty of territory to conquer, but working out what else it boasts proves difficult. Another unintelligible -to-Brits war game. Impossible to judge. ?/10

ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 93%
A brilliantly designed and implemented adventure that puts similar games to shame, in much the same way as *Mario* dominates the platform world – unsurprising, when Nintendo's top programmer was involved in both games. This is, of course, utterly fabulous, though *Zelda* addicts may complain it's not quite as long and drawn out as previous games. 9/10

Don't forget, if a game's not in What Cart? write and tell us. Send the details with a short review to: *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

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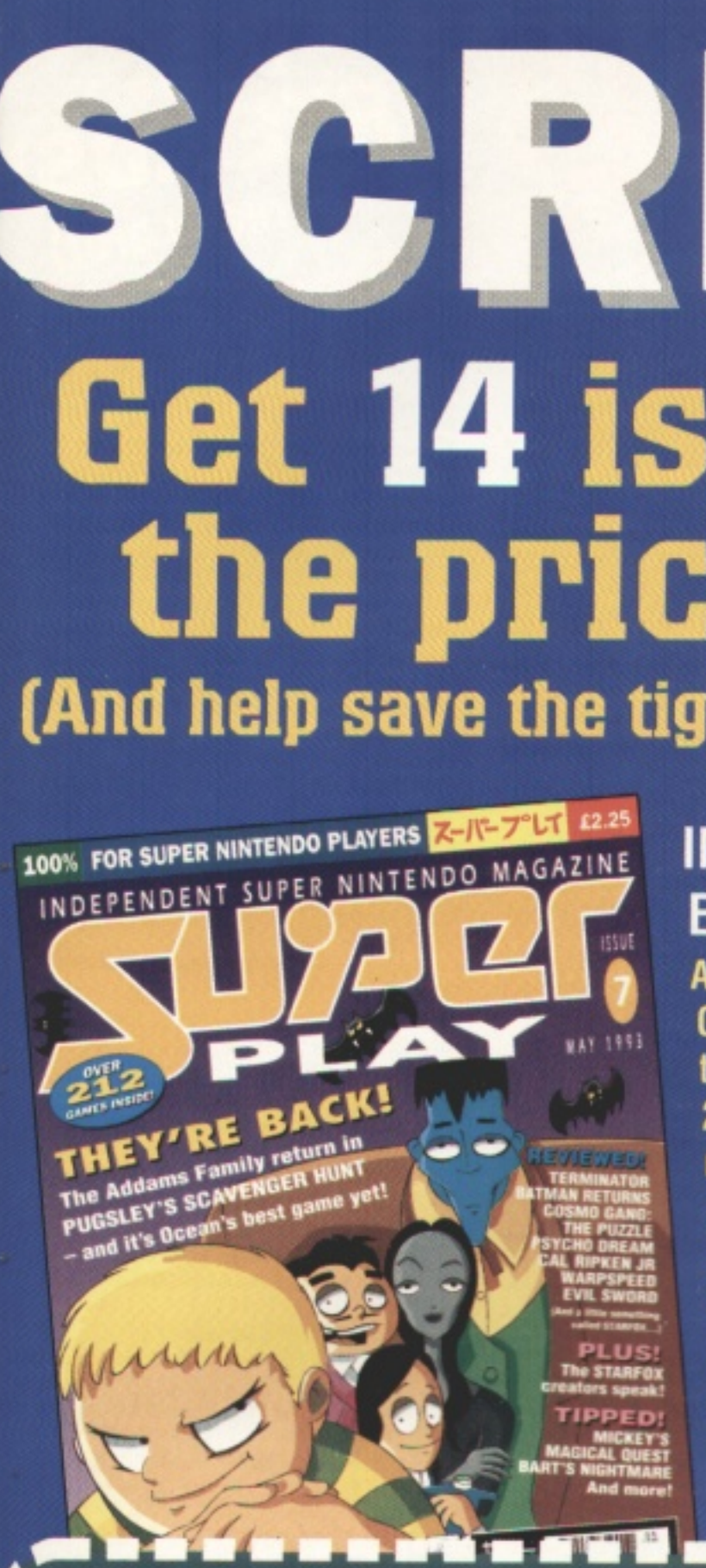

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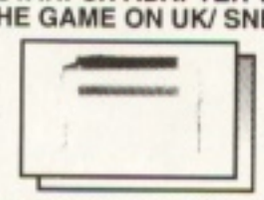

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NEXT MONTH

IN SUPER PLAY!

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

THE SECRETS OF THE GAMES INDUSTRY REVEALED!

Ever wondered how a game makes the transition from a game-designer's head to your Super Nintendo? No? Er... damn. Well *we* have, and, like it or not, next month we'll be doing a massive feature explaining the whole thing. We'll be visiting a top software developer and finding out who does what, what they use to do it with, and what you have to do if you want to do what they're doing with what they're doing it with. (*Eh? – Ed.*) It'll be great. (Trust us.)

REVIEWED!

We'll have even more reviews than ever before next month, including *Cool World* (can Ocean top *Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt*?), *Super Tom And Jerry* (better than the itchy and Scratchy bit of *Bart's Nightmare*?), *Powermonger* (hopefully), *Alien 3* (definitely), *MVP Football*, *Pop'n Twin Bee* (which should be fab), *Super James Pond* (er... can Ocean top *Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt*?), *F1 Exhaust Heat 2* (vroom!), *Nigel Mansell F1 Championship* (screeech!), *F1 Grand Prix Part 2* (brrrm!), *Super F1 Hero* (rooom! rroooom!), *International Tennis Tour* (from Loriciel), *Super Famistar 2* (baseball), *2020 Baseball* (more baseball, only futuristic), *Yoshie's Cookie* (hurrah!), *Bio Metal* (a shoot-'em-up), *Mech Warrior* (a robotty shoot-'em-up), *Super Dunkshot* (Jez has been waiting for this one), *Ogre Battle* (nice graphics), *Super Wagan Land 2* (erm...), *Devil's Course* (weird golf game), *USA Ice Hockey* (better than *NHLPA*?), *Great Battle 3* (robot-based beat-'em-up) and anything else that comes our way.

Top: *Mech Warrior* – a blaster with robots in. Above: *Nigel Mansell F1*. Over there somewhere: *Super James Pond*.

JAPANESE GAMES – THE INSIDE STORY

Um... Okay, here's what's happening. We really, really are doing our best to get the full low-down on the people behind Japanese games. We had every confidence in the men we picked to go where none had gone before. But time after time they've let us down. What can we say? Would it be any comfort if we told you that we've really done it this time? We've managed to track down The World's Toughest Man. He's called 'Chainsaw' Charlie Chipsnapper, he's been in intensive training for weeks, he pulls people's legs off with his bare hands, and he's going to go in and sort out those Japanese programmers once and for all. Expect a full report from us next month. (Really.)

In this series of shots: Here's a sneak preview of 'Chainsaw' Charlie checking his weapons, practising his abseiling, and generally preparing to invade Nintendo HQ (see map to the right).

TIPPED!

Next month we'll be blowing apart *Starfox* (well, tipping it quite extensively, anyway) in a magnificent playing guide. And that's not all! (However, that *is* all we're telling you this month. Tune in next issue for more details.)

PLUS!

- Two new regular columns! (You'll have to wait a month to see what they are, though.)
- Find out if the tiger's survived.
- Er...
- And lots of other things!

Can it possibly be true? You'll be able to find out on Thursday, 6 May, when the eighth issue of *Super Play* comes out.

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SUPER QUIZ

THE ANSWERS!

Remember that rock hard quiz from page 20? Well, here are the answers. How well did you do?

1) M Bison
2) Bob Hoskins
3) Konami
4) He's the mayor
5) Kyoto
6) They've all got music written by the same man (Yuzo Koshiro)
7) YS IV
8) D413
9) Susumi Matsushita
10) His name's Hibiki, and he's from *Macross* (which isn't a game, but is a fab Japanese animation series with giant robots in, and looked a suitable sort of thing to decorate a corner of our *Assault Suits Valken* review with).

(By the way, you start with 96, divide by 12, and add 21. Subtract the result from 128, divide by 9, and subtract 6. Now pick up issue 5 of *Super Play*, turn to page 30 and there he is!)

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